

1 The interaction of Solar Radiation Modification with Earth System

2 Tipping Elements

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14 **Abstract.** The avoidance of hitting tipping points has been invoked as a significant benefit of Solar Radiation
15 Modification (SRM) techniques, however, the physical science underpinning this has thus far not been
16 comprehensively assessed. This review assesses the available evidence for the interaction of SRM with a number
17 of earth system tipping elements in the cryosphere, the oceans, the atmosphere and the biosphere, with a
18 particular focus on the impact of Stratospheric Aerosol Injection. We review the scant available literature directly
19 addressing the interaction of SRM with the tipping elements or for closely related proxies to these elements.
20 However, given how limited this evidence is, we also give a first-order indication of the impact of SRM on the
21 tipping elements by assessing the impact of SRM on their drivers. We then briefly assess whether SRM could halt
22 or reverse tipping once feedbacks have been initiated. Finally, we suggest pathways for further research. We find
23 that, when temperature is a key driver of tipping, well-implemented, homogenous, peak-shaving SRM could be
24 at least partially effective at reducing the risk of hitting most tipping points examined relative to the same
25 emission pathway scenarios without SRM. Nonetheless, very large uncertainties remain, particularly when
26 drivers less strongly coupled to temperature are important, and considerably more research is needed before many
27 of these large uncertainties can be resolved.

28 1 Introduction

29 Climate Change caused by anthropogenic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is increasingly recognised
30 as a major threat to human and ecological systems (IPCC, 2023). One aspect of climate change that is

gaining increased attention are earth system tipping points (Lenton et al., 2023), which are seen as potentially triggering dangerous changes increasing the risk of negative impacts of anthropogenic climate change and thus demand action to reduce the likelihood of hitting them (Lenton et al., 2019). These impacts of climate change also have to be considered alongside the growing crisis of biodiversity loss, which is less widely recognised but is nonetheless dangerously pushing ecological systems towards lower biodiversity states (Legagneux et al., 2018). Climate change and biodiversity loss may influence and reinforce each other (climate-induced habitat loss; reduced CO₂ uptake).

Solar Radiation Modification (SRM, a.k.a. Solar geoengineering) has been proposed as a set of methods that could ameliorate some of these climate risks by reflecting a fraction of incoming sunlight and to cool the Earth directly, and is gaining salience at national (National Academies of Sciences and Medicine, 2021) and international (United Nations Environment Programme, 2023) levels. SRM has been discussed in the context of these growing dangers to humans and the biosphere from tipping points (Bellamy, 2023; Heutel et al., 2016; National Academies of Sciences and Medicine, 2021), but thus far, no comprehensive review of the impact of SRM on a variety of earth system tipping elements have been performed. We discuss the potential for SRM to help avoid, postpone or precipitate hitting tipping points in the cryosphere, atmosphere, oceans, and biosphere, with particular attention to the impact on the drivers of tipping in these systems, as well as assess the possibility of SRM reversing tipping once tipping points have been hit.

1.1 Tipping Elements

Several definitions for tipping elements in the earth system have been suggested (Armstrong McKay et al., 2022; Lenton et al., 2008; Van Nes et al., 2016). While details differ, their common denominator is that at a critical threshold (the tipping point) a small additional change in some driver leads to qualitative changes in the system (e.g., Fig. 1a,b). As explicitly stated in Armstrong McKay et al., (2022) and Van Nes et al. (2016), and described in nearly all examples in Lenton et al. (2008), these qualitative changes are brought about by self-perpetuating processes caused by positive feedbacks which drive the system to a new state. While the “state” of climate tipping elements can often be characterised by a single indicator, for example the mass of the Greenland ice sheet, this may not hold for ecological systems, which may have a variety of stable assemblages (Fig. 1f).

We use the word “driver” for the key variables external to the system that initiate the relevant changes, and “dynamics” for the self-accelerating processes that accomplish the tipping. Typically, once these processes have kicked in, they will continue even if the drivers stop increasing, or even decrease. An edge case is threshold-free feedbacks, such as Marine Methane Hydrates (Armstrong McKay et al.,

2022; Lenton et al., 2008; Van Nes et al., 2016), systems in which positive feedbacks play a role but are not strong enough to lead to run-away processes (Fig. 1e). These are commonly discussed alongside tipping elements, so some examples will be discussed here. When referring collectively to the systems discussed in this article, we will use the term ‘tipping element’ and only classify further where necessary.

Not just the magnitude, but also the trajectory of drivers may determine whether tipping occurs. For example, ice sheets have long response times and may only tip if the temperature overshoot is of sufficient duration (Ritchie et al., 2021; Wunderling et al., 2022a). On the other hand, some tipping elements may be more susceptible to fast changes than to slow changes (rate-induced tipping, Fig. 1d), even if the eventual magnitude of the change is the same (Ashwin et al., 2012). Some systems may have more than one driver (e.g., precipitation change and deforestation in the Amazon).

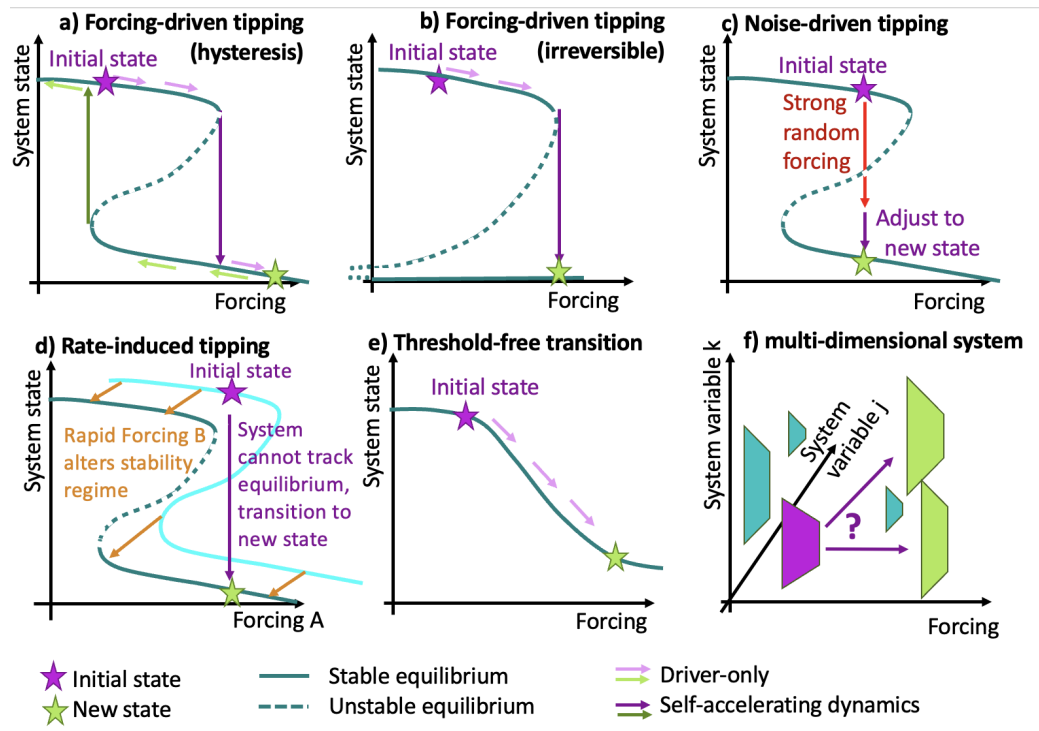


Figure 1 Different tipping processes. Solid (dashed) lines denote stable (unstable) equilibria. a,b Drivers (change in forcing) push the system closer to the tipping point; when it is reached, the system undergoes self-perpetuating changes (“feedbacks”) and reaches a new state. The process can be reversible (possibly with hysteresis) if the forcing is reverted (a) or completely irreversible (b; e.g. loss of a specific ecosystem assemblage due to species extinction). c) Random fluctuations push the system

80 into an alternative state even before the actual tipping point is reached; easier if already close to
81 tipping point. d) Rapid forcing changes prevent the slowly evolving system from tracking its original
82 equilibrium state, causing a transition (rate-dependent tipping). e) Threshold-free feedbacks lead to
83 strong system changes under forcing, but no self-reinforcing dynamics (tipping) occurs. f) Complex
84 systems (e.g. ecological systems) cannot necessarily be captured by a single system variable and may
85 have many equilibrium states; final outcome may e.g. depend on precise forcing trajectory.

86 Armstrong McKay et al. (2022) tie their tipping points to global warming thresholds. However, a
87 tipping element may have other climate drivers, e.g. precipitation in the Amazon region, thus making
88 the tipping point not merely global-temperature-related. When only greenhouse-gas-induced climate
89 change is considered, one might assume that non-temperature drivers scale with GMST, which acts as
90 proxy for the overall strength of climate change. However, if SRM is considered, other climate drivers
91 do not necessarily scale with GMST; for example, SRM may restore GMST but fail to restore
92 precipitation in the Amazon (Jones et al., 2018). Especially in ecological systems, drivers not related to
93 climate, such as human-induced deforestation, also play a key role (Sect. 5.2).

94 1.2 Solar Radiation Modification

95 While phasing out (net) greenhouse gas emissions remains the only way to address the root cause of
96 climate change, various climate intervention approaches have been suggested to complement mitigation
97 and reduce global warming and its impacts. This includes Solar Radiation Modification (SRM), a set of
98 proposed technologies aimed at increasing the earth's albedo, reducing incoming solar radiation and
99 thus reducing global surface temperatures (National Academies of Sciences and Medicine, 2021).
100 Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI) is currently the best researched and the most plausible candidate
101 to generate significant, fairly homogeneous cooling, and thus is the deployment method primarily
102 discussed in this article. SAI would mimic the effect of large volcanic eruptions by injecting particles or
103 precursor gas (most commonly suggested is SO₂) into the stratosphere to create a thin reflective aerosol
104 cloud.

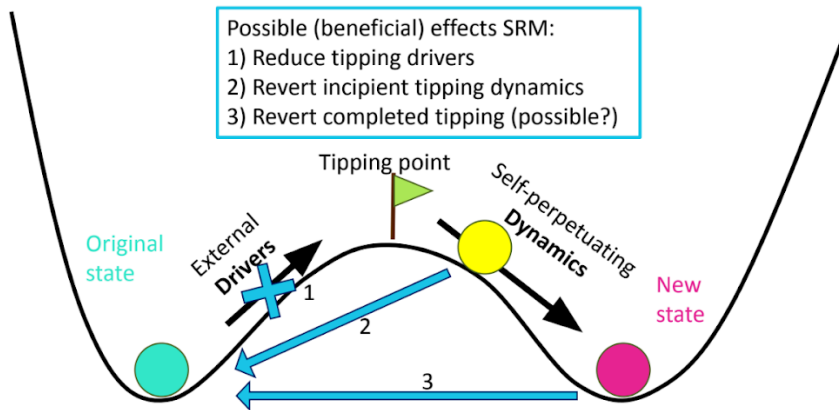
105 Even if SRM can be used to reverse Global Mean Surface Temperature (GMST) rise from increasing
106 Greenhouse Gas concentrations (Tilmes et al., 2020), it does not reverse the anthropogenic greenhouse
107 effect, but acts through a different mechanism, i.e. reflecting sunlight. This means that SRM does not
108 cancel the effect of increased greenhouse gas concentrations perfectly. Although modelling studies
109 suggest that SRM might bring many relevant climate variables closer to their pre-industrial values
110 (Irvine et al., 2019), residual changes to atmospheric, oceanic and ecological systems would remain.
111 SRM might introduce additional effects, such as changes in regional hydrological cycles relative to both

112 same emission scenarios and same temperature scenarios (Ricke et al., 2023), or changes in the balance
113 between direct and indirect solar radiation. Alongside its physical impacts, the possible political and
114 societal effects of SRM may be equally important, including the risk of conflict (Bas and Mahajan,
115 2020), mitigation deterrence (McLaren, 2016), and issues of imperialism (Surprise, 2020), democracy
116 (Stephens et al., 2021) and justice (Horton and Keith, 2016; Táíwò and Talati, 2022). We stress that the
117 risks and potential benefits of SRM does not solely depend on its effects on climate, including tipping
118 points, but would have to be assessed in a holistic risk assessment framework.

119 SRM implementation could follow many scenarios, with various background greenhouse gas
120 trajectories, SRM approaches (SAI or alternatives), deployment sites, starting and end times, and
121 intensities (MacMartin et al., 2022), potentially including a mix of more or less coordinated regional
122 approaches (Ricke, 2023). Unless otherwise specified, we assume a “peak-shaving” scenario, i.e.
123 background greenhouse gas trajectory that would lead to a potentially large, multi-decade temperature
124 overshoot, which is eventually brought under control by negative emission technologies. Against this
125 background, SAI is used to produce a largely homogeneous cooling that limits global mean surface
126 temperature (GMST) overshoot to a constant target, such as 1.5°C above pre-industrial, resembling
127 (MacMartin et al., 2018; Tilmes et al., 2020). Unless specified, we assume the impacts of SRM are
128 relative to the same emissions pathway without SRM deployment.

129 1.3 Solar Radiation Modification and Tipping Elements

130 SRM might prevent earth sub-systems (tipping elements) from crossing tipping points, or it might push
131 systems over tipping points. In ecological systems, which have many drivers and many possible states,
132 it is also possible that both SRM and climate change without SRM would lead to hitting different
133 tipping points within the same tipping element. The question may then not be *whether* tipping can be
134 caused or prevented, but *which* tipping will occur under certain conditions.



135

136 *Figure 2. Possible ways by which SRM could counteract tipping.*

137 1) Reducing drivers of tipping before the critical threshold (tipping point) is reached. 2) Reverting
 138 tipping dynamics (shortly) after it is initialised, but before tipping is completed, such that the tipping
 139 feedbacks have begun but the process is not yet complete. 3) Revert tipping after it is completed. This
 140 may not be possible or practicable in many cases. While not depicted here, SRM may also adversely
 141 affect some tipping points.

142 SRM may prevent tipping in several ways (Fig. 2). First, SRM may *prevent* a tipping point from being
 143 reached by reducing or counteracting drivers of tipping. This would require a timely implementation of
 144 SRM, i.e. before the tipping point is reached. If SRM were terminated before other measures (e.g.
 145 negative emissions) are in place to reduce drivers, SRM may only postpone tipping. Moreover, if
 146 insufficient amounts of SRM were used - maintaining, for example, a constant SRM forcing rather than
 147 the constant Global Mean Surface Temperature (GMST) assumed in the peak shaving scenario - SRM
 148 may also only postpone tipping.

149 In the absence of direct (modelling) evidence on SRM's impact on a tipping element, a first indication
 150 can be obtained by studying how SRM might affect known drivers. If the relevant drivers roughly scale
 151 with GMST, we expect that SRM would reduce the likelihood of tipping compared to the same GHG
 152 concentration without SRM. If the key drivers are precipitation, regional climate or other factors that are
 153 not directly related to global temperature, then the effect of SRM might be harder to determine,
 154 particularly due to our much higher uncertainty in modelling studies of the impact of SRM on these
 155 climatic variables. Some of these drivers may also strongly depend on the design of the SRM scheme.

SRM might conceivably revert tipping if tipping dynamics has already started (process 2 in Fig. 2), but not completed, or even after completion (process 3 in Fig. 2). As the complexity of the feedbacks and nature of hysteresis are generally less well understood than the initial drivers, the potential for reversal is often much harder to assess, especially in the absence of dedicated studies. It would be difficult in practice to design SRM for reverting incipient tipping (similar to “emergency deployment” discussed in Lenton (2018)), because precise prediction of the onset of tipping is impossible (Lenton, 2018). Reversal of completed tipping, even if theoretically possible, might require unfeasibly high SRM intensities in case of hysteresis, and would likely play out over timescales much larger than policy timescales. Therefore we will not explicitly discuss it. Our main focus is prevention of tipping drivers, because more evidence is available and because it may be more practically relevant for near-term decision-making. Reversal (process 2 in Fig. 2) will be discussed where appropriate.

This study reviews a number of key tipping elements and threshold-free feedbacks, largely following those laid out in Armstrong McKay et al. (2022). We aim to provide a preliminary analysis of the interaction of SRM with a wide - but not exhaustive - range of tipping elements. Each section is then structured as follows. Firstly, we assess the drivers and mechanisms of the tipping process. This was done to allow us to then review the impact of SRM on these drivers to give a first order indication of whether SRM could prevent - and to a lesser extent, if it could reverse - tipping. Where available, we also review direct modelling evidence of the effect of SRM on the tipping elements, although many of the models used don’t have sufficient complexity to actually show tipping dynamics in the elements, which is a limitation. Finally, we provide recommendations for future research.

1.4 Results overview

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Tipping Element	Effect on Drivers	Reversibility	Strength of evidence base
Greenland Ice Sheet collapse (GIS) (Sect. 2.1)	DC: Atmospheric warming (+, Eff) Precipitation (-, Part-Over) <u>Overall:</u> <u>Partial-Effective compensation (??)</u>	Likely ineffective. While destabilisation of GrIS could be prevented, reversing previous losses is not possible on multidecadal/centennial timescales due to ice sheet inertia	Intermediate - basic theory and several model studies suggest SAI could offset drivers, limited evidence on reversibility

Antarctic Ice Sheet collapse (AIS) (Sect. 2.2)	<p>DC: Atmospheric warming (+, Part-Eff) Ocean warming (+, No-Part) Precipitation (-, Part-Eff) CA: Circumpolar deep water driven melt (+, Worse-No)</p> <p><u>Overall: Unknown(???)</u></p>	Likely ineffective. As ocean thermal forcing is the primary driver of current mass loss, reversal would be difficult on decadal to centennial timescales due to ocean and ice sheet inertia.	Weak - the Marine Ice Cliff Instability tipping point is largely theoretical and few studies exist on SAI's impacts on Antarctica.
Mountain Glacier loss (MG) (Sect. 2.3)	<p>DC: Atmospheric warming (+, Part-Eff) Precipitation (-, Part-Over)</p> <p><u>Overall: Partial-Effective compensation (?)</u></p>	Likely partially effective. Atmospheric cooling could reverse the surface elevation feedback, depending on how much surface elevation has decreased. Cooling may also increase precipitation falling as snow.	Intermediate - basic theory and several model studies suggest SAI could offset most drivers, but limited evidence on reversibility and glaciers outside mid latitude Asia.
Winter Arctic sea-ice abrupt loss (WASI) (Sect. 2.5)	<p>DC: near-surface atmospheric warming (+, Part)</p> <p><u>Overall: Partial compensation (??)</u></p>	Likely effective with sufficient local cooling.	Intermediate – supported by several studies, including inter-modal comparisons, and theory, although no study explicitly assesses the impact of SAI on threshold behaviour.
Summer sea-ice decline, both Arctic and Antarctic (SSI) (Sect. 2.5)	<p>DC: near-surface atmospheric warming (+, Part-Eff) CA: Ocean and atm. circulation (+/-,Unk)</p> <p><u>Overall: Partial-Effective compensation (?)</u></p>	Likely effective with sufficient local cooling.	Intermediate – supported by several studies, including inter-modal comparisons, and theory

Boreal permafrost thaw (BPF) (Sect. 2.6)	<p>DC: soil warming (+, Eff) Increased precipitation (+, Eff), CA: increased wildfire (+, Unk), vegetation change (+/-, Unk)</p> <p><u>Overall: Effective compensation (??)</u></p>	Likely ineffective for abrupt thaw. Gradual thaw is likely a threshold-free feedback process without tipping dynamics.	Intermediate – supported by several studies, and basic theory for the main driver. However, various processes impacting GHG release from permafrost thaw are not captured in current ESMs.
Marine methane hydrates loss at continental shelf (MMC) (Sect. 2.7)	<p>DC: ocean warming (at shelf depth) (+, Unk)</p> <p><u>Overall: Unknown(???)</u></p>	N/A – methane release from hydrates is likely a threshold-free feedback process without large-scale tipping dynamics. The carbon that had been previously released would remain in the atmosphere after SRM deployment.	Weak – no studies directly assess the impact of SRM.
Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation collapse (AMOC) (Sect. 3.1)	<p>DC: Surface ocean warming (+,Part-Eff), Precip - Evap increase (+, Eff-Over), CA: Greenland ice loss (+,Part-Eff), Sea ice loss (+?, Eff)</p> <p><u>Overall: Partial-Over compensation (??)</u></p>	Uncertain, but possibly partially effective. Surface cooling might help restart deep convection and deepwater formation. Sea ice expansion may however impede surface heat loss	Intermediate. Several modelling studies suggest SRM reduces weakening; models may underestimate AMOC stability.
Sub-Polar Gyre collapse (SPG) (Sect. 3.2)	<p>DC: Surface ocean warming (+,Part-Eff), Precip - Evap increase (+, Eff-Over), CA: Greenland ice loss (+,Part-Eff), Sea ice loss (+?, Eff)</p> <p><u>Overall: No-Effective compensation (???)</u></p>	Uncertain, but possibly partially effective. Surface cooling might help restart deep convection. Sea ice expansion may however impede surface heat loss.	Weak. Model disagreement about whether and when SPG could tip. Only one model study dedicated to SRM effect on SPG.

Antarctic Bottom Water collapse (AABW) (Sect. 3.3)	<p>CA: Antarctic ice melt (+, No-Part). Wind changes, heat flux (?)</p> <p><u>Overall: Unknown (???)</u></p>	Unknown. Dependent on the effect of SRM on Antarctic ice melt.	Very weak. Poor process understanding; no dedicated studies on effect of SRM.
Marine Stratocumulus Collapse (MSC) (Sect. 4.1)	<p>DC: GHG forcing (+, No), Atmospheric warming (+, Eff).</p> <p><u>Overall: Partial compensation (???)</u></p>	Partially effective. SRM could reverse warming and might reverse tipping point, but not for extremely high GHG forcing.	Very weak - This tipping point and SAI's effects on it are largely hypothetical.
Amazon Rainforest Dieback (AR) (Sect. 5.2)	<p>DC: Drought (+, Worse-Eff), Atmospheric warming (+, Eff), Precipitation loss (+, Worse-Eff), vapour pressure deficit (+, Part-Eff), CA/NC: Fire (+, Worse-Part; No for human-caused wildfires)</p> <p>NC: deforestation/degradation (+, No)</p> <p><u>Overall: No-Partial compensation (???)</u> with regional heterogeneity. In West Amazon, overall Worsening-Partial compensation (???), however this is less significant for regional tipping than the East Amazon.</p>	Unknown, but likely ineffective. Likely heterogenous impacts, and dependent on the very uncertain impacts of SRM on the tipping microclimate.	Weak. Weak process understanding, and many relevant processes sub-grid scale so poorly captured in ESMs. It may be highly dependent on deployment scheme.

Shallow Sea Tropical Coral Reefs loss (TCR) (Sect. 5.3)	DC: Surface ocean warming (+, Eff), storm intensity (+, Part), CA: ocean water acidity (+, Worse-No), disease spread (+, No-Unk) NC: Fishing (+, No), Pollution (+, No) <u>Overall: Partial-Effective compensation (?)</u>	Likely ineffective to partially effective with significant regional heterogeneity. After some mass mortality events, corals can reestablish themselves, whereas in other regions macroalgae establish themselves which SRM is unlikely to reverse.	Intermediate. Strong process understanding, although the relative importance of drivers still unclear. Very few modelling studies explicitly on the impact of SRM on corals. Some very limited experimental work on MCB.
Himalaya-to-Sun derbans system biodiversity loss (HTS) (Sect. 5.4)	DC: Atmospheric warming (+, Part-Eff), Monsoon precipitation (+/-, Unk) CA: glacier melt (+, Part), sea level rise (+, Part) NC: land-use change (+, No) <u>Overall: Unknown (???)</u>	Uncertain, likely with significant regional heterogeneity. For example, glaciers could be restored and the ecosystems reliant on them, but in other cases (e.g. where keystone species have gone extinct) reversal may be impossible.	Weak. Despite some process understanding, very limited modelling of tipping dynamics or the relative importance of different factors, no explicit studies of the impact of SRM on the system as a whole.
Northern Boreal Forests dieback (NBF) (Sect. 5.5)	DC: Atmospheric warming (+, Eff), permafrost thawing (+, Eff); Precipitation changes (+/-, Part-Over); CA: snow cover loss (+, Part-Over), wildfires (+, Part) CA: Insect outbreak (+, Part-Eff) <u>Overall: Partial compensation (??)</u>	Likely effective over century timescales. Trees that shifted northward could recolonise the tipped areas, although microclimatic effects, and precipitation effects, make this uncertain.	Weak. Despite some process understanding and some confidence of SRM's impact on the temperature controlled mechanisms, there is a lack of any modelling of the impacts of SRM on the forests, which means understanding the impacts of the other factors are very uncertain.

178 Table 1: The Effect of SRM on Earth System Tipping Elements

Effect on Drivers means the effect of SRM on the drivers of tipping before the tipping point is reached (Stage 1 of Fig. 2). The drivers named here are mostly the “primary drivers” listed in Lenton et al. (2023), although “secondary drivers” have been added when appropriate. We follow Lenton et al. (2023) in referring to Direct Climate (DC) drivers (e.g. warming), Climate-Associated (CA) drivers (eg sea ice loss affecting AMOC), and Non-climate (CA) drivers (e.g. deforestation). Bolded drivers are primary drivers. We indicate whether the driver impacts tipping by using + (exacerbates tipping) and - (reduces tipping). We then use a letter code to assess the impact of SRM in a scenario with roughly neutralised GMST, as laid out in Sect. 1.3 on these drivers. **Over**compensation (>125%), nearly **Effective** compensation (75 to 125%), **Partial** compensation (25 to 75%), **No** compensation (-25 to 25%), **Worsening** (<-25%) and **Unknown** (no judgement can be made). These numbers are necessarily imprecise ‘best guesses’ based on the evidence. We then use 0-3 question marks to say how large our uncertainty is.

Reversibility means the effect of SRM on tipping once the tipping point is reached and self-perpetuating feedbacks have set in, but before tipping is complete (Stage 2 of Fig. 2).

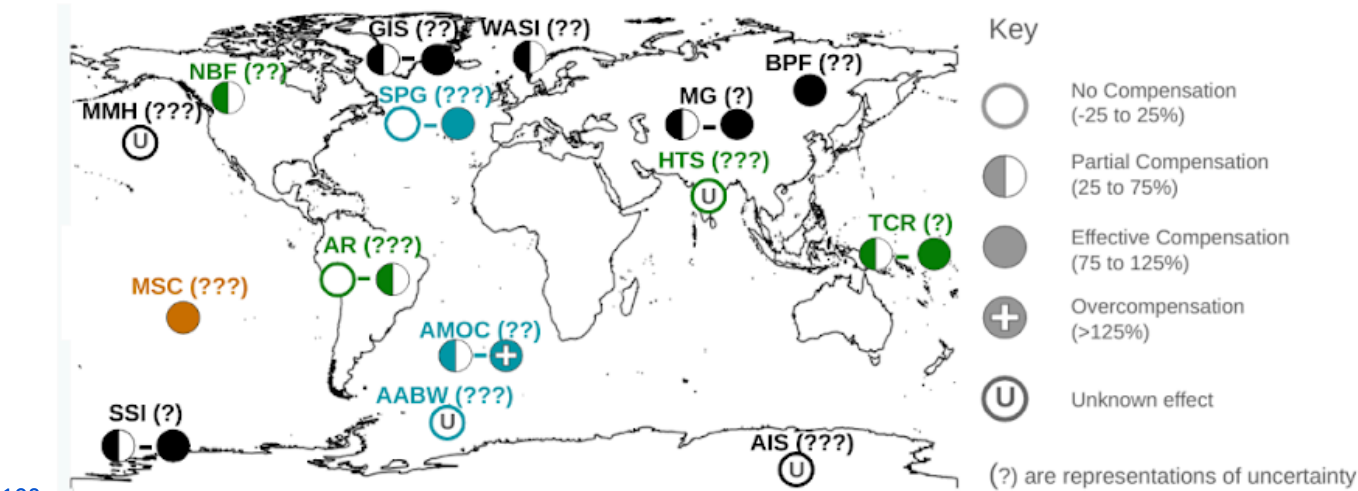


Figure 3: The Effect of SRM on Earth System Tipping Elements

Abbreviations found in Table 1. We colour cryosphere elements black (AIS= Antarctic Ice Sheet, BPF= Boreal Permafrost Thaw, GIS= Greenland Ice Sheet Collapse, MG= Mountain Glaciers, MMH= Marine Methane Hydrates Loss at the continental shelf, SSI= Summer Sea Ice decline, WASI= Winter Arctic Sea Ice abrupt loss, Sect. 2), ocean elements blue (AABW=Antarctic Bottom Water Collapse, AMOC= Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation Collapse, SPG=Sub-Polar Gyre Collapse, Sect. 3), atmosphere elements brown (Marine Stratocumulus Collapse, Sect. 4) and biosphere elements green (AR=Amazon Rainforest Dieback, HTS=Himalaya-to-Sunderbans system biodiversity loss, NBF=Northern Boreal Forests dieback, TCR= Tropical Coral Reefs Loss, Sect. 5). The compensation and uncertainty judgements is our assessment for the overall effect on drivers from Table 1.

205 Out of the 15 tipping elements assessed (Table 1, Fig. 3), the available evidence suggests that SRM
206 would probably reduce tipping drivers at least partially for 9 tipping elements. No tipping element was
207 found to have the overall effect of SRM on its drivers exclusively worsened, although some tipping
208 drivers were made worse and in some tipping elements (e.g. the Amazon), there may be regions where
209 tipping risk worsens, even if it doesn't overall. For four tipping elements no judgement on the sign of
210 SRM influence could be made due to lack of evidence. Our uncertainty was judged to be considerable
211 to very large for 13 tipping elements. The evidence base was judged as weak or very weak for 8 of the
212 tipping elements, and intermediate for the remaining 7; no tipping element had a strong evidence base
213 for the impact of SRM on it. Compared to SRM's effect on drivers, its potential to reverse ongoing
214 tipping is much harder to assess. If our (highly uncertain) findings are correct, then a well-implemented
215 peak-shaving SAI programme would reduce the probability of tipping for most tipping elements, while
216 using SRM to reverse tipping once it started may be much more difficult and uncertain.

217 **2 Cryosphere**

218 **2.1 Greenland Ice Sheet Collapse**

219 Over the past few decades, mass loss from the Greenland ice sheet has accelerated (Shepherd et al.,
220 2012), its mass balance has become more negative (Otosaka et al., 2023) and surface elevation has also
221 declined (Chen et al., 2021; Yang et al., 2022). This mass loss has been increasingly dominated by
222 surface melt, which is expected to continue to be the major influence of Greenland sea level
223 contribution over the next century (Enderlin et al., 2014; Goelzer et al., 2020). The release of freshwater
224 from melting is also expected to slow the AMOC (Sect. 3.1), affecting global heat transfer (Golledge et
225 al., 2019).

226 In the future, Greenland appears committed to significant mass loss, with the IPCC projecting the *likely*
227 *range* (17-83 percentile range) of sea level contributions of between 0.01-0.1m and 0.09-0.18m by 2100
228 for the SSP1-2.6 and SSP5-8.5 emissions scenarios, respectively (Fox-Kemper et al., 2021). For 2300,
229 *likely* sea level contributions are more uncertain, but range from 0.11–0.25m for SSP1-2.6 and
230 0.31–1.74m for SSP5-8.5. Aschwanden et al. (2019) find that the surface-elevation feedback (Sect.
231 2.1.1) plays a role in the persistent mass loss from Greenland, even when temperatures are stabilised at
232 2500. This study may overestimate surface melt rates, however, due to the assumption of spatially
233 uniform warming. There is *limited evidence* for complete mass loss from Greenland between 1.5-3°C of
234 sustained warming, but for 3-5°C, there is *medium confidence* in near-complete loss over several
235 thousand years (Fox-Kemper et al., 2021). It ought to be noted that, whilst the IPCC AR6 assessment
236 (Fox-Kemper et al. 2021) finds that the evidence for collapse under 3°C is limited, paleoclimatic data

237 does find evidence for past collapses in this range (Christ et al., 2021), leading to Lenton et al. (2023)
238 placing the critical threshold between 0.8-3°C of warming.

239 **2.1.1 Drivers and Feedbacks**

240 Controls on the Greenland ice sheet are strongly driven by atmospheric temperature changes, consisting
241 of the interlinked surface-elevation and melt-albedo feedbacks (Levermann and Winkelmann, 2016;
242 Robinson et al., 2012; Tedesco et al., 2016). These feedbacks are closely linked to surface mass balance.

243 Surface mass balance describes the balance of accumulation and ablation on a glacier or ice sheet's
244 surface. Accumulation comes from snowfall, while loss is a result of melting and runoff, evaporation,
245 and wind driven redistribution of snow (Lenaerts et al., 2019). If ablation across a glacier or ice sheet
246 outweighs accumulation, surface mass balance is negative, meaning it is losing mass overall. Total mass
247 balance also considers mass gains and losses from ice in contact with the ocean, such as basal melt and
248 calving.

249 When a glacier or ice sheet undergoes surface melting, its elevation decreases. At lower altitudes,
250 surface air temperature rises (Notz, 2009), allowing more surface melting and a further decrease in
251 elevation (Lenton et al., 2008). At a critical threshold, this surface-elevation feedback mechanism could
252 continue unabated. Melting also exposes bare ice, old ice and ground, and creates melt ponds, all of
253 which have a lower albedo than snow. These surfaces absorb more incoming solar radiation, leading to
254 increased heating and more melt (Notz, 2009). This melt-albedo feedback can be exacerbated by the
255 presence of debris such as black carbon and dust on the ice surface, reducing albedo before melt has
256 even occurred (Goelles et al., 2015; Kang et al., 2020). Both of these feedbacks could, however, be
257 partially mitigated by post-glacial rebound. Post-glacial rebound describes the gradual rise in the Earth's
258 crust following glacier retreat, when the burden of the overlying ice pushing it down has been removed.
259 This would counteract some surface lowering, though would likely not occur on useful timescales to
260 alleviate the rapid mass loss if these feedbacks were triggered (Aschwanden et al., 2019).

261 **2.1.2 The impacts of SRM**

262 SRM would lower atmospheric temperatures rapidly, decreasing the amount of surface melting on the
263 Greenland ice sheet (Irvine et al., 2018). Irvine et al. (2009) found that even partially offsetting warming
264 (by decreasing the solar constant) in a 4 x CO₂ world would be enough to slow the sea level
265 contribution from the ice sheet and prevent collapse. Both (Irvine, 2012; Moore et al., 2010) found that
266 Greenland collapse could even be reversed if SRM strategies managed to offset the radiative forcing at a

fast enough rate. In contrast, Applegate and Keller (2015) find that while SRM can reduce the rate of mass loss from Greenland, it cannot completely stop it, and strong hysteresis prevents rapid regrowth when temperatures are reverted. Fettweis et al. (2021) also see reduced surface melt when reducing the solar constant from a high forcing to a medium forcing scenario compared with a high emissions scenario, in part due to a weakening of the melt-albedo feedback. However, this reduction is not enough to prevent negative mass balance being reached by the end of the century, and therefore a possible tipping point being crossed.

Using an energy balance model for the whole ice sheet and an ice dynamics model for the Jakobshavn Isbrae drainage basin Moore et al. (2019) estimate that Greenland mass loss is decreased by 15-20% under the G4 Geoengineering Model Intercomparison Project (GeoMIP) scenario, which involves a 5 Tg injection of SO₂ per year from 2020 to 2070 under an RCP4.5 scenario, compared with RCP4.5 alone. This is due to the reduction in surface melting and dynamic losses, despite a slight strengthening of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation increasing heat transfer to high latitudes under G4. Moore et al. (2023) then build on this by using two ice sheet models to also include the impact of ocean temperature and dynamic losses for the whole ice sheet. They find that the reduction in ice dynamic losses and surface melt under G4 is strongly model dependent but G4 does reduce both by an average of 35% compared with RCP4.5. Reduction is not uniform due to the topographic differences in drainage basins across the ice sheet.

Lee et al. (2023) find that SAI at 60°N is effective at reducing surface melt and runoff from the ice sheet, but impacts are not localised with cooling throughout the northern hemisphere and a southward shift of the Intertropical Convergence Zone. However, mirroring SAI in the southern hemisphere has been shown to minimise this shift (Nalam et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2022).

SAI may also result in some sulphate deposition in southern and western Greenland (Visioni et al., 2020). This would lower the albedo and could enhance the melt-albedo feedback, though the extent to which this would be negated by the decrease in temperatures and incoming solar radiation is unknown.

2.2 Antarctic Ice Sheet Collapse

Likely sea level contributions from Antarctica by 2100 range from 0.03-0.27m under SSP1-2.6, to 0.03-0.34m under SSP5-8.5 (Fox-Kemper et al., 2021). As for Greenland, there is deep uncertainty in projections to 2300, but these range from -0.14 to 0.78m and -0.27 to 3.14m without the inclusion of marine ice cliff instability (Sect. 2.2.1), for SSP1-2.6 and SSP5-8.5, respectively. Substantial melting would inject large amounts of cold freshwater into the oceans, potentially changing oceanic circulation

298 by inhibiting Antarctic Bottom Water formation (Li et al., 2023a; Rahmstorf, 2006), a key component in
299 global heat transfer (Bronse laer et al., 2018). As for Greenland, between 1.5-3°C sustained warming,
300 there is limited evidence on the complete loss of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, but for 3-5°C, substantial
301 or complete loss is projected for both the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (*medium confidence*) and the Wilkes
302 Subglacial Basin in East Antarctica (*low confidence*) over several thousand years (Fox-Kemper *et al.*
303 2021). Similar to the Greenland Ice Sheet, Lenton *et al.* (2023) places the critical thresholds lower than
304 the IPCC, with 1-3°C for the West Antarctic Ice Sheet and 2-6°C for the Wilkes Sub-Glacial Basin in
305 East Antarctica, again partially based on paleoclimatic data.

306 Mass loss from Antarctica is currently driven primarily by the ocean, which melts and thins the base of
307 ice shelves (IMBIE Team, 2020). This reduces their buttressing capabilities, which can increase ice
308 velocities and discharge into the ocean (Gudmundsson et al., 2019). Current Antarctic air temperatures
309 mean surface melting is limited and not a major component of direct mass loss, but it is expected to
310 increase the likelihood of ice shelf disintegration in future (van Wessem et al., 2023).

311 2.2.1 Drivers and Feedbacks

312 Both the East and West Antarctic Ice Sheet are tipping elements which could be triggered due to ice
313 sheet instabilities. The West Antarctic Ice Sheet is grounded almost completely below sea level
314 (Morlighem et al., 2019). Many areas are situated on reverse (retrograde) bed slopes, meaning that here,
315 the bedrock in the interior is more depressed than the coasts due to the weight of the overlying ice, and
316 so it slopes downwards inland (Weertman, 1974).

317 This topography makes the West Antarctic Ice Sheet vulnerable to marine ice sheet instability (MISI),
318 where rapid retreat and collapse could be initialised due to a destabilising of grounding lines (the area
319 where grounded ice begins floating to become an ice shelf or calves into the ocean (Pattyn, 2018)). If
320 grounding line retreat reaches the reverse slope of the bed, a tipping point can be initiated as continued
321 retreat puts the grounding line in deeper waters where the ice is thicker. As the flux of ice across the
322 grounding line is related to ice thickness, this increases ice discharge and pushes the grounding line
323 further downslope in a positive feedback that can only be reversed if buttressing increases or the bed
324 slope reverses (Gudmundsson, 2013; Weertman, 1974).

325 Parts of the East Antarctic Ice Sheet are similarly grounded below sea level with reverse bed slopes and
326 so are also potentially vulnerable to MISI, such Wilkes and Aurora Basins, and Wilkes Land, with the
327 latter being the main region of mass loss in the East Antarctic Ice Sheet (Rignot et al., 2019).

328 The major driver of MISI is ocean thermal forcing, e.g. from the upwelling of Circumpolar Deep Water.
329 This water mass can be more than 4°C warmer than the freezing point and is driving basal melting in
330 the Amundsen Sea Embayment (Jacobs et al., 2011). CDW upwelling is wind driven, and may have
331 been influenced by anthropogenic climate change, though this process is poorly understood (Dotto et
332 al., 2019; Holland et al., 2019).

333 MISI is thought to be a key driver of possible collapse above 2°C and 3°C atmospheric warming for the
334 West and East Antarctic ice sheets, respectively (Garbe et al., 2020; Golledge et al., 2015; Lipscomb et
335 al., 2021; Pattyn, 2018). The IPCC (Fox-Kemper et al., 2021) states that “the observed evolution of the
336 ASE glaciers is compatible with, but not unequivocally indicating an ongoing MISI” (Fox-Kemper et
337 al., 2021).

338 Another, more uncertain tipping process that could push both the East and West Antarctic Ice Sheets
339 into unstable retreat is marine ice cliff instability (MICI). The MICI theory posits that ice shelves with
340 ice cliffs taller than ~100m are theoretically unstable due to the stress of the overlying ice exceeding the
341 ice yield strength (Bassis and Walker, 2011). Therefore, if ice shelf disintegration produces cliffs of this
342 height, it may potentially trigger a self-sustained collapse and retreat of the grounding line (Pollard et
343 al., 2015).

344 MICI has never been observed, with only indirect palaeo evidence (e.g. (Wise et al., 2017), and is a
345 highly uncertain process (Edwards et al., 2019). Rates and duration of this self-sustained collapse are
346 poorly known. The IPCC (Fox-Kemper et al., 2021) states that there is *low confidence* in simulating
347 MICI. Models that invoke MICI processes present higher sea level rise projections than most other
348 studies (DeConto et al., 2021). Under 2°C warming, (DeConto et al., 2021) project the rate of mass loss
349 to 2100 as similar to present day, but at 3°C, this jumps by an order of magnitude, increasing further for
350 more fossil fuel intensive scenarios

351 MICI’s drivers are similar to MISI, as both can be preceded by ice shelf disintegration from ocean
352 thermal forcing. Atmospheric temperatures can also influence ice shelf collapse through hydrofracture
353 (Trusel et al., 2015; van Wessem et al., 2023).

354 2.2.2 The impacts of SRM

355 There are few studies which focus on the impact of SRM on the East or West Antarctic Ice Sheet, but
356 there is evidence to suggest that it would cool surface air temperatures around Antarctica (Visioni et al.,
357 2021), which may limit hydrofracturing. SRM may be more limited in its ability to prevent Antarctic
358 tipping points, however, as the ocean takes decades to centuries to respond to a change in atmospheric

359 forcing. This is seen by (Sutter et al., 2023) who find that committed Southern Ocean warming means
360 that under RCP4.5, SRM would have to be deployed by mid century to delay or prevent a West
361 Antarctic Ice Sheet collapse. Under RCP8.5, however, SRM cannot prevent collapse. Hysteresis
362 experiments find that regrowth occurs much more slowly than mass loss (Garbe et al., 2020). DeConto
363 et al. (2021) and Garbe et al. (2020) show that the ocean's slow response to atmospheric thermal
364 changes means that while implementing Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR, which may have a somewhat
365 similar thermal effect to SRM) in the first half of this century could reduce sea level rise compared to a
366 3°C warming scenario it cannot reverse it. SRM may also be less effective at cooling the poles than the
367 tropics as during the polar night where there is limited or no solar radiation, it would have no effect
368 (McCusker et al., 2012).

369 (McCusker et al., 2015) suggest that sulphate SAI induced stratospheric heating would intensify and
370 shift southern hemisphere surface winds poleward, increasing CDW upwelling and therefore basal
371 melting. This finding, however, may be injection strategy dependent as injection of a different aerosol
372 may not cause the stratospheric heating observed (Keith et al., 2016). In addition, the poleward shift
373 seen from tropical injection location (McCusker et al., 2015) is not seen for a southern hemisphere
374 injection where the jet shifts equatorward (Bednarz et al., 2022); (Goddard et al., 2023). Goddard et al.,
375 (2023) also find that, while the Antarctic response to SRM is strongly dependent on injection strategy,
376 multi-latitude sulphate SAI injection that limits global warming to 0.5°C above preindustrial could
377 prevent possible collapse of much of the Antarctic ice sheet.

378 In summary, SRM would therefore likely be effective in reducing surface melting and hydrofracturing,
379 but it would not be as effective at reducing basal melt. For sulphate SAI in particular, it is unclear how
380 the resultant stratospheric heating will affect atmosphere and ocean circulation, and therefore also CDW
381 upwelling. In addition, a reduction in atmospheric temperatures would reduce the moisture-holding
382 capabilities of the air, decreasing the amount of precipitation falling as snow on Antarctica. Mid latitude
383 SAI itself would also dampen the hydrological cycle and suppress precipitation (Irvine et al., 2018;
384 Tilmes et al., 2013; Visioni et al., 2021). Therefore, if SRM's effect on reducing basal melt is limited,
385 while simultaneously decreasing snowfall accumulating on Antarctica, it is also possible that it could be
386 more harmful to Antarctica than doing nothing at all: in a warmer, non-SRM world, increasing
387 precipitation may slightly offset some mass loss (Edwards et al., 2021; Stokes et al., 2022).

388 **2.3 Mountain Glacier Loss**

389 Current trends of glacier mass balance globally are negative, with glacier mass loss accounting for
390 ~40% of current observed sea level rise from 1901-2018 (Rounce et al., 2023; Zemp et al., 2019).

(Zemp et al., 2019) also show that if present rates of mass loss were sustained, Western Canada, the USA, central Europe and low latitude glaciers would lose almost all mass by 2100. The glaciers in high mountains of Asia are projected to lose their total mass by 60-70% by the end of the century under the RCP8.5 scenario and by 30-40% even if global warming is limited to 1.5°C (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2017). Most glaciers are not in equilibrium with the current climate and so are still responding to past temperature changes. Therefore, it is projected that they will continue to experience substantial mass loss through the 21st century, regardless of which emissions scenario is followed (Marzeion et al., 2018, 2020; Zekollari et al., 2019). Sustained warming of 1.5-3°C is projected to result in glacier mass loss of 40-60%, increasing up to 75% for 3-5°C (*low confidence*, Fox-Kemper et al., 2021).

2.3.1 Drivers and Feedbacks

Mountain glaciers are, like the Greenland ice sheet, subject to the surface-elevation and melt-albedo feedbacks which could lead to unabated retreat (Johnson and Rupper, 2020), but due to their smaller size, they are more sensitive to climatic changes and respond on shorter timescales. They are also affected by additional local drivers and feedbacks such as changing snow patterns and slope instabilities. These local feedbacks are not discussed here as we are focused on the global scale processes affecting mountain glaciers more generally.

(Rounce et al., 2023) see that mass loss in larger glaciated areas is linearly related to global temperature, but that smaller regions are much more sensitive to warming, leading to a non-linear relationship above 3°C.

2.3.2 The impacts of SRM

Each individual glacier has its own topographical and climatological conditions affecting mass balance and it is unlikely that SRM would have a uniform effect. Reducing temperatures using SRM would be more effective for low latitude glaciers where an increased proportion of the energy flux is shortwave (Irvine et al., 2018). Zhao et al. (2017) find that though SRM can limit mass loss from all glaciers in high mountain Asia by 2069, retreat is still observed due to their slow response times to temperature changes. Under the G3 and G4 scenarios, glacier area losses in 2089 are 47% and 59% of their 2010 areas, respectively, compared with 73% under RCP4.5. G3 involves a gradual increase in the amount of SO₂ injected to keep global average temperature nearly constant at (projected) 2020 levels under an RCP4.5 scenario (Kravitz et al., 2011).

SRM counteracts hydrological changes to different extents (both on a global and, more pertinently, regional level) to how it counteracts temperature change (Ricke et al., 2023), so while melt may be reduced, surface mass balance could be decreased overall through reduced snowfall in the accumulation zone. Idealised experiments using a reduction of the solar constant to halve the warming resulting from doubled CO₂ indicate that negligible amounts of the planet would see substantially reduced precipitation compared to preindustrial (Irvine et al., 2019), but precipitation changes from SRM specifically are unlikely to be uniform. (Zhao et al., 2017) highlight that, for Himalayan glaciers, this precipitation decrease may be much less important compared with whether the precipitation is falling as snowfall in the accumulation zone or as rainfall, in which case SRM-induced cooling might prove valuable. Outside of the Himalayan region, there is a lack of research on precipitation impacts.

2.4 Land Ice Further Research

Currently, there are large gaps in the literature and high model uncertainty with regards to how SRM will affect land ice, particularly Antarctica. There is a need for multi-model ensembles forced by various SRM scenarios, including aerosols other than sulphate and methods other than SAI. As suggested in Irvine, Keith and Moore (2018), the inclusion of GeoMIP scenarios in the Ice Sheet (Nowicki et al., 2016) and Glacier (Hock et al., 2019) Modelling Intercomparison Projects (ISMIP and GlacierMIP, respectively) would allow direct comparisons with standard emission scenarios.

The GeoMIP SAI scenarios are fairly simplistic as they prescribe only an equatorial injection and do not take into account the equator-to-pole temperature gradient. As SRM impacts the polar regions differently compared with the rest of the globe, targeted SRM injection at specific latitudes could be more effective, though it could yield different results depending on location. For example, (Bednarz et al., 2022) find that a northern hemisphere SAI injection with sulphate drives a positive southern annular mode, whereas southern hemisphere injection results in a negative southern annular mode response. This area therefore requires more research. Running ice sheet and glacier model ensembles forced by the Geoengineering Large Ensemble project (GLENS, (Tilmes et al., 2018)) simulations would aid further exploration of the effects of targeted SAI, as these experiments inject at 30°N, 30°S, 15°N and 15°S. Seasonal SAI has also been shown to be more effective for Arctic sea ice than year round injection (Lee et al., 2021): expanding this to land ice would also be an important avenue for future research.

449 2.5 Sea Ice

450 Sea ice is frozen seawater, typically 10s of cm to several metres thick, and at any one time covers
451 around 7% of the earth's surface, although this coverage is decreasing at around 10% per decade
452 (Fetterer, 2017). The annual Arctic sea-ice minimum extent has declined by 50% since satellite
453 observations began in the late 1970s (Fetterer, 2017). The Arctic is expected to be seasonally ice-free by
454 mid-century; a majority of CMIP6 models have ice-free periods during the Arctic summer by 2050
455 under all plausible emissions scenarios (Notz and SIMIP Community, 2020). CMIP6 models project a
456 decline in Winter sea ice which is linear in both cumulative CO₂ and warming (Notz and SIMIP
457 Community, 2020).

458 Despite substantial warming, there was a slight increasing trend in Antarctic sea ice through the
459 observational record until around 2014 (Parkinson, 2019), likely due to natural variability (Meehl et al.,
460 2016). However, in recent years, a series of low sea-ice extents have occurred; Antarctic sea ice was at
461 the lowest extent on record in 2022, only to be surpassed by a new record low in February 2023
462 (Fetterer, 2017). Projections of Antarctic sea ice response to climate change have lower confidence than
463 for the Arctic, due to poorer model representation (Masson-Delmotte *et al.*, 2021). CMIP6 models
464 predict a decline over the 21st Century of 29-90% in summer and 15-50% in Winter, depending on the
465 emissions scenario (Roach et al., 2020).

466 2.5.1 Drivers and Feedbacks

467 On decadal time-scales, Arctic sea-ice area has declined linearly with the increase in global mean
468 temperature over the satellite period in all months (Notz and Stroeve, 2018). Local radiative balance at
469 the sea-ice edge may also be an important control on Arctic sea ice extent (Notz and Stroeve, 2016), and
470 large scale modes of atmospheric variability, such as the Arctic Oscillation, also contribute strongly to
471 interannual variability (Mallett et al., 2021; Stroeve et al., 2011). Unlike in the Arctic, almost all of the
472 Antarctic sea ice is seasonal, disappearing each summer. Wind patterns, modulated by large scale modes
473 of atmospheric circulation such as the Southern Annular Mode, are a key driver of Antarctic sea ice
474 extent on inter-annual to decadal timescales (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2021).

475 Sea ice under global warming is subject to the ice albedo feedback (Serreze et al., 2009), whereby the
476 loss and thinning of sea ice reduces the surface albedo so increases the absorption of solar radiation,
477 leading to additional warming, and further sea-ice loss. As a result, it has been posited that sea ice loss
478 could be subject to tipping points (Merryfield et al., 2008; North, 1984). However, there are also
479 stabilising feedbacks. Open ocean during the polar night can rapidly vent heat to the atmosphere (e.g.

480 Serreze et al., 2007), thin ice grows faster than thick ice (Bitz and Roe, 2004), and later forming ice has
481 a thinner layer of insulating snow cover on entering the winter months and so can grow more quickly
482 (Hezel et al., 2012; Notz and Stroeve, 2018)

483 These mechanisms likely prevent tipping-point behaviour from arising for summer Arctic sea ice; GCM
484 simulations find that arctic sea ice is expected to recover to an equilibrium state associated with the
485 large scale climate forcing within 1-2 years of complete removal (Tietsche et al., 2011), and the
486 observed time-series of summer sea-ice extent has a negative 1-year lag autocorrelation, that is, years
487 with low summer sea-ice extent are typically followed by years with above average extent and vice
488 versa (Notz and Stroeve, 2018). Both satellite observations (Notz and Marotzke, 2012; Notz and
489 Stroeve, 2018) and modelling studies (Tietsche et al., 2011) concur that the stabilising feedbacks
490 outweigh the destabilising ice-albedo feedback to mean that summer sea ice loss is not
491 self-perpetuating, such that the overall sea ice-extent is expected to remain tightly coupled to the
492 external driver, i.e., temperature rise, throughout its decline (Stroeve and Notz, 2015). For Winter Arctic
493 sea ice, there is a potential for abrupt areal loss at a threshold warming (Bathiany et al., 2016). This is
494 because once the arctic is seasonally ice free, sea ice coverage drops to zero wherever the ocean is too
495 warm to form sea ice in a given year, and if warming is spatially uniform, this transition can happen
496 rapidly over a large area at a threshold warming level (Bathiany et al., 2016). Local positive feedback
497 processes may also contribute to the abrupt winter Arctic sea-ice loss seen in some models (Hankel and
498 Tziperman, 2021).

499 2.5.2 The impacts of SRM

500 There is broad agreement across models that SRM would cool both the Arctic and Antarctic (Berdahl et
501 al., 2014; Vioni et al., 2021). As expected given this cooling, various models have shown a reduced
502 loss of both Arctic (Jiang et al., 2019b; Jones et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020, 2021) and Antarctic (Jiang et
503 al., 2019b; McCusker et al., 2015) sea ice under SRM. Under the GeoMIP scenarios G3 and G4, SAI
504 delays the loss of sea ice but this is not sufficient to prevent the loss of almost all September sea ice in
505 most models (Berdahl et al., 2014). However, it is likely that this is due to insufficient cooling, and that
506 a world at the same global mean temperature without SRM would also lose all September sea ice in
507 these models (Duffey et al., 2023).

508 Under equatorial or globally uniform injection, SRM likely cools the Arctic less strongly than the global
509 mean and thus results in greater arctic amplification, and loss of Arctic sea ice at a given global mean
510 temperature (Ridley and Blockley, 2018). This effect is reduced with greater injection in the mid and
511 high latitudes. For example, the Geoengineering Large Ensemble simulations in CESM (Tilmes et al.,

2018), which use injection at multiple latitudes to hold global temperature at its 2020 value, while also controlling the meridional temperature gradient, show a 50% increase in Arctic September sea-ice extent relative to present day (Jiang et al., 2019b). Similarly, several studies have modelled SAI with high latitude injection and found that such strategies can effectively halt declines in Arctic sea ice under high emissions scenarios (Jackson et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2021, 2023), potentially more efficiently per unit SO₂ injection than low latitude injection strategies (Lee et al., 2023).

Winter arctic sea ice is restored less effectively than summer sea ice in modelling of SRM scenarios (Berdahl et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2019b; Lee et al., 2021, 2023). For example, one SRM scenario sees 50% more sea-ice extent at the September minimum than the control case (at the same global mean temperature without SRM), but 8% less extent at the March maximum (Jiang et al., 2019b). This is linked to a general under-cooling of the polar winter by SRM, and an associated suppression of the seasonal cycle at high latitudes (Jiang et al., 2019b; Duffey et al., 2023). However, modelling of SRM shows at least partial effectiveness at increasing winter sea ice and reducing local winter near-surface air temperatures relative to the same emissions pathway without SRM (Berdahl et al., 2014; Jiang et al., 2019b; Lee et al., 2021, 2023). As such, it is likely that SRM would decrease the probability of passing any potential thresholds to more abrupt winter Arctic sea-ice decline.

The literature on Antarctic sea-ice response to SRM is more limited than for the Arctic case. The modelling of volcanic eruptions suggests an asymmetric response to hemispherically symmetric aerosol forcings, with Antarctic sea ice extent increasing much more weakly than Arctic under volcanic cooling (Pauling et al., 2021; Zanchettin et al., 2014). A similar result is found in the Geoengineering Large Ensemble simulations in CESM (Tilmes et al., 2018, Jiang et al., 2019b). Antarctic sea ice is less well preserved than Arctic sea ice under this SRM simulation, particularly in austral winter, with a 23% reduction in maximum extent relative to the baseline. However, while several modelling studies show only incomplete preservation of Antarctic sea ice under SRM relative to the target world, in all cases the extent of sea ice is increased relative to the warmer world without SRM (Jiang et al., 2019b; Kravitz et al., 2013; McCusker et al., 2015).

Sea-ice loss is expected to be reversible were temperatures to reduce (Ridley et al., 2012; Tietsche et al., 2011). As such, we would expect sufficient SRM cooling to be capable of restoring sea ice after the onset of ice-free conditions.

541 2.5.3 Further Research

542 There has been little study of the impact of SRM on Antarctic sea ice. Given the potential hemispheric
543 asymmetry in response to aerosol forcing discussed above, and in the context of concerns over the
544 ability of SRM to arrest Antarctic change (Sect. 2.2), this is an important research gap. Additionally,
545 there has been little work- (Ridley and Blockley, 2018) is a notable exception - assessing the different
546 impact of SRM versus avoided emissions on Arctic and Antarctic climate and sea ice under SRM, at a
547 given global mean temperature. Such assessments would aid in making a fully quantitative statement on
548 the effectiveness of SRM strategies for sea-ice restoration (Duffey et al., 2023).

549 2.6 Permafrost

550 Permafrost is perennially frozen soil which stores around 1500 GtC in the form of organic matter,
551 roughly twice as much carbon as is found in the atmosphere (Meredith et al., 2019). As the earth warms,
552 permafrost thaws and subsequent decomposition of thawed organic matter releases CO₂ and methane,
553 further warming the planet. As such, permafrost thaw is a positive feedback on global temperature,
554 known as the permafrost carbon feedback. The permafrost carbon feedback is estimated to add-roughly
555 0.05 °C per °C to global temperature increase (Schuur et al., 2015). The strength of the permafrost
556 carbon feedback depends, not only on the reduction in permafrost, but also on the proportion of carbon
557 emissions released as CO₂ versus methane, and on the degree of offsetting by increased plant biomass in
558 current permafrost regions (Wang et al., 2023).

559 Over the 21st century, greenhouse gas emissions from thawing permafrost are expected to be similar in
560 magnitude to those of a medium sized industrial country, with estimates from ESMs putting emissions
561 at order of magnitude 10 GtCO₂e per °C global warming by 2100 (Masson-Delmotte et al., 2021). For a
562 rapid decarbonisation scenario limiting warming to under 2°C by 2100, permafrost GHG emissions are
563 expected to use up perhaps 10% of the remaining emissions budget (Comyn-Platt et al., 2018; Gasser et
564 al., 2018; MacDougall et al., 2015).

565 2.6.1 Drivers and Feedbacks

566 Gradual permafrost thaw occurs due to vertical thickening of the active layer in response to warming at
567 rates of centimetres per decade (Grosse et al., 2011; Turetsky et al., 2020). However, locally, permafrost
568 is also subject to abrupt thaw, which refers to deep thaw occurring on rapid timescales of days to several
569 years due to processes such as the physical collapse of the surface caused by ice melt and the formation
570 of thermokarst lakes (Schuur et al., 2015; Turetsky et al., 2020). Such abrupt thaw may increase the

571 strength of the permafrost carbon feedback substantially relative to that modelled in ESMs, which do
572 not include these processes. For example, Turetsky et al. (2020) report an increase in estimated
573 permafrost carbon release by 40% and an increase in global warming potential by 100% when abrupt
574 thaw is taken into account in addition to gradual thaw by active layer thickening.

575 Soil temperature is the fundamental control on permafrost thaw, and this in turn is principally controlled
576 by annual mean near-surface air temperature (Burke et al., 2020; Chadburn et al., 2017). Earth system
577 models predict an approximately linear decline in permafrost area with air temperature increase over the
578 current permafrost regions (Slater and Lawrence, 2013). Various other factors also impact soil
579 temperature however, including vegetation cover, precipitation type and amount, and wildfire (Grosse et
580 al., 2011). For example, summer rainfall fluxes sensible heat into the soil, increasing thaw (Douglas et
581 al., 2020), and snow cover over winter insulates the soil, increasing its annual mean temperature (Zhang
582 et al., 1997).

583 Armstrong McKay et al. (2022) suggest with low confidence a potential threshold behaviour at $>4^{\circ}\text{C}$
584 global warming or 9°C of local warming for near-synchronous and rapid thaw of large areas of
585 permafrost, particularly Yedoma deposits (Strauss et al., 2017), driven by an additional local positive
586 feedback on thawing due to heat production from microbial metabolism. The self-accelerating
587 permafrost thaw driven by this additional feedback is driven in part by large local rates of warming
588 (Luke and Cox, 2011). Others, however, have suggested that no such global mean temperature threshold
589 applies, with global permafrost loss being quasi-linear in global warming throughout its decline
590 (Nitzbon et al., 2024). If a global temperature threshold at 4°C exists, Armstrong McKay *et al.* (2022)
591 estimate that passing it might lead to a pulse of one-off GHG emissions over 10-300 years equivalent to
592 a rise in global mean temperature of $0.2\text{-}0.4^{\circ}\text{C}$. This potential global tipping element is in addition to
593 the occurrence of localised abrupt thaw which becomes more widespread at warming above
594 approximately 1.5°C (Armstrong McKay et al., 2022).

595 Considering the total land carbon feedback, rather than just the permafrost carbon feedback, the
596 increase in net primary productivity in current permafrost regions will offset at least some of the loss of
597 permafrost carbon over this century (Schuur et al., 2022). Some simulations even show the permafrost
598 regions as net carbon sinks under warming, due to warming and CO_2 fertilisation increasing the
599 productivity of vegetation (McGuire et al., 2018).

600 2.6.2 The impacts of SRM

601 There is good inter-model agreement that SRM would reduce mean annual air temperature over the
602 permafrost regions (Berdahl et al., 2014; Vioni et al., 2021), so we expect it to reduce permafrost thaw
603 relative to warming scenarios without SRM. Modelling studies support this expectation; only a handful
604 of modelling studies have assessed the permafrost response to SRM, but all find reduced loss of
605 permafrost carbon with deployment of SRM (Chen et al., 2020, 2023; Jiang et al., 2019b; Lee et al.,
606 2019, 2023; Liu et al., 2023).

607 The inter-model spread in permafrost projections is large and can be larger than the difference between
608 SRM and non-SRM scenarios (Chen et al., 2020), so multi-model assessments are desirable. Three
609 studies have assessed the permafrost response to SRM in a multi-model context using the GeoMIP
610 simulations (Chen et al., 2020, 2023; Liu et al., 2023). These studies show that SRM avoids a large
611 fraction of the permafrost loss projected under warming scenarios without SRM. For example, using
612 equatorial SAI to bring global temperatures in line with a medium emissions scenario (SSP2-4.5) under
613 a high emissions scenario (SSP5-8.5) is modelled to mitigate most (>80%) of the extra permafrost
614 carbon loss associated with the high emissions scenario (Chen et al., 2023).

615 However, global SRM strategies typically under-restore permafrost relative to their impact on global
616 mean temperature because they see residual warming in the permafrost regions (Chen et al., 2020,
617 2023). It is likely that SRM strategies targeted at restoring polar climate, by injecting more aerosols
618 outside of the tropics, could largely avoid this effect. For example, almost all the 21st century permafrost
619 loss under the high emissions scenario RCP8.5 is avoided under an SAI scenario which modifies
620 injections to target the equator to pole gradient, as well as global mean temperature (Jiang et al., 2019b)

621 While there has been no modelling study assessing the potential for SRM to avert the widespread and
622 rapid decline envisioned under the permafrost ‘collapse’ scenario of Amstrong-McKay *et al.* (2022), the
623 fundamental driver of this tipping behaviour is surface temperature, and as such, we expect that
624 reducing local temperatures using SRM would reduce the likelihood of this scenario. However, as it is
625 driven by internal heat production, it seems unlikely that SRM could substantially help reverse tipping
626 once this ‘collapse’ scenario had begun, were the near-synchronous onset across a large part of the
627 permafrost regions, assumed by Amstrong-McKay et al. (2022), to take place. Similarly, while SRM
628 might reduce the onset of localised abrupt thaw processes, it would be unlikely to reverse these
629 processes once begun.

630 Emissions from thawed permafrost are irreversible on centennial timescales (Schaefer et al., 2014;
631 Schuur et al., 2022). SRM would not be able to reverse the increased atmospheric GHG concentrations
632 once permafrost thawing had occurred.

633 **2.6.3 Further Research**

634 The permafrost response in ESMs does not include the feedback processes leading to abrupt thaw and
635 local tipping behaviour (Turetsky et al., 2020), so the quantitative assessments above principally apply
636 to the gradual thaw component; further development of ESMs to include such processes would allow
637 more robust quantitative assessment of the impact of SRM (Lee et al., 2023). Additionally, the broader
638 study of the high latitude land carbon feedback under SRM would benefit from the attention of
639 scientists from a range of backgrounds, including soil science and ecology, to quantify the impact of
640 simultaneous changes in temperature, hydrology and CO₂ concentration expected under SRM.

641 Greater understanding is also required of the degree and cause of under-cooling of Northern
642 Hemisphere high latitudes under SRM, and the dependence of such under-cooling on the injection
643 strategy. This would facilitate quantification of the expected permafrost carbon feedback under different
644 SRM strategies.

645 **2.7 Marine Methane Hydrates Release**

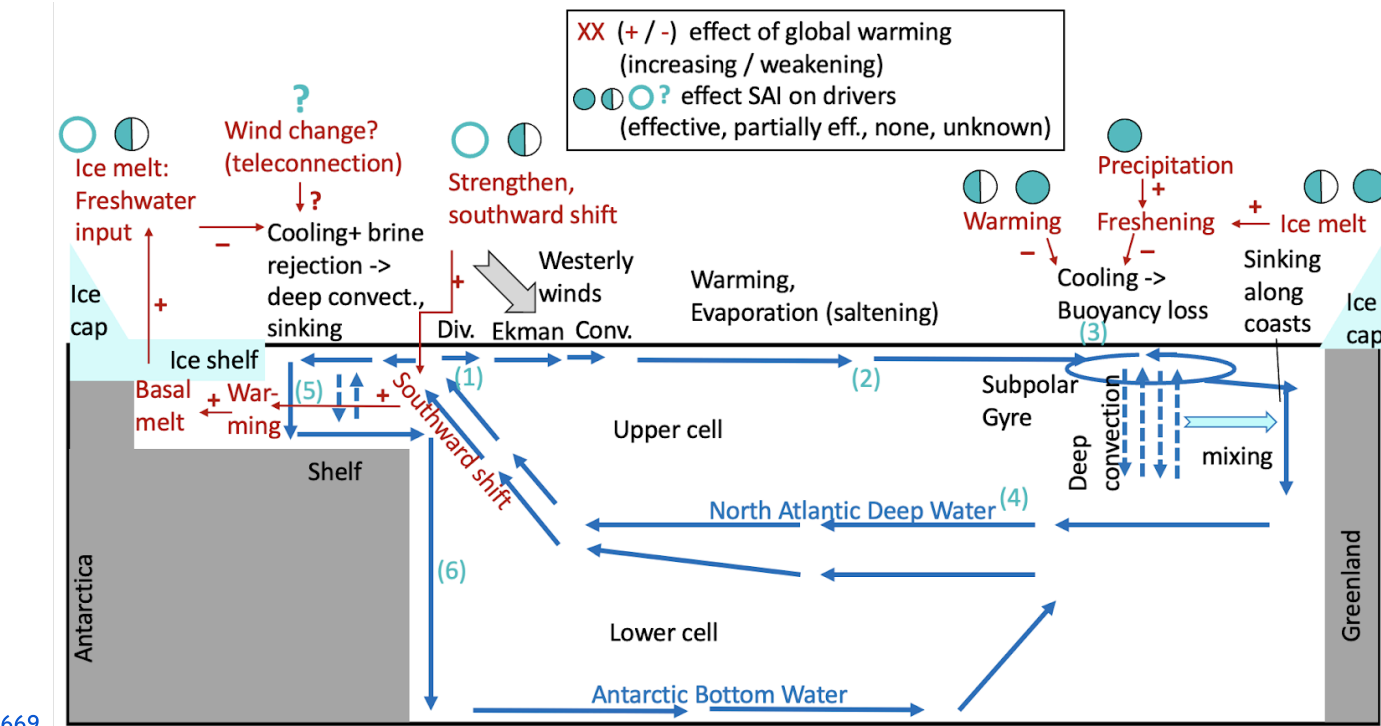
646 Marine methane hydrates are methane trapped in water ice in sea floor sediments. These hydrates
647 contain a large amount (1000s of GtC) of methane and are vulnerable to melt over millennia given
648 several degrees of ocean warming, and so represent a positive climate feedback that may have
649 contributed to past warming events on geological timescales (Archer et al., 2009). However, globally
650 significant methane emissions from hydrates on decadal or centennial timescales are very unlikely
651 (Masson-Delmotte *et al.*, 2021; Schuur *et al.*, 2022). There is no expected threshold warming level
652 associated with methane hydrates as a whole and thus they are typically considered a threshold-free
653 feedback rather than tipping element (Armstrong McKay *et al.*, 2022) and at moderate warming levels
654 (e.g. 2°C) they likely exert a negligible impact on surface temperature (Wang *et al.*, 2023).

2.7.1 The impacts of SRM

There is no literature which we are aware of which evaluates the impact of SRM on methane hydrates. The reduction in surface temperature under SRM, if maintained over the multi-centennial timescale of deep-ocean heat uptake, might be expected to reduce ocean-floor temperatures and thus the rate of melt. However in the curve-flattening scenarios without SRM (i.e. an overshoot scenario), the overshoot may not be long enough (MacMartin et al., 2018) for its impacts to be felt by the methane hydrates in the deep ocean (Ruppel and Kessler, 2017), meaning SRM may have little benefit over such scenarios. Moreover, there is no consensus yet amongst models on the large-scale ocean circulation response to SRM (Fasullo and Richter, 2023).

3. Oceans

This section treats three possible tipping elements, all part of the Atlantic and Southern Ocean circulation (see Fig. 4): The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC; Fig. 4 process 1-4), deep convection in the north Atlantic Subpolar Gyre (SPG, Fig. 4 process 3), and Antarctic Bottom Water formation (Fig. 4 process 5-6).



669

Figure 4: Schematic of the Atlantic circulation. (1) Westerly winds around 40°S drive a northward Ekman transport, south of which divergence enables the upwelling of North Atlantic Deep water. (2) To the north, water moves northwards, warming and saltening through evaporation. (3) In the subpolar gyre, water moves counterclockwise, aided by the cold core of the gyre and thermal wind effects. Winter cooling drives deep convection, thereby cooling the water inside the gyre over great depths. Cold water mixed into coastal currents (e.g. along Greenland) helps to drive sinking there. (4) The resulting North Atlantic Deep Water returns to the South. (5) Very dense Antarctic Bottom Water (AABW) is formed in sea-ice-free stretches around Antarctica, where water is exposed to cold air and salinification through brine rejection. It sinks along the shelf edge (6) and feeds the lower circulation cell. Global warming may warm and freshen surface water in the North Atlantic, reducing deep convection and weakening the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation and the Subpolar Gyre (3); SRM is likely partially effective to effective. In the South, global warming can affect Antarctic meltwater input by increasing the upwelling of warm water onto the shelf, hindering densification and hence Antarctic Bottom Water formation (5). SRM is likely not fully effective (Sect. 3.3). The effect of other drivers, e.g. wind change, on AABW formation is uncertain.

3.1 Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) Collapse

The upper branch of the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) transports salty, warm water towards the subpolar North Atlantic, where it sinks and returns to the south (Fig. 4). In order to sink, this water must be sufficiently dense compared with the deeper water, therefore surface warming or freshening inhibits sinking. North-Atlantic sinking is at least partly compensated by water rising in the Southern Ocean, due to an interplay of Ekman-driven upwelling and eddy flow (Johnson et al., 2019; Marshall and Speer, 2012).

Climate models project AMOC to weaken under global warming, but in general models do not predict collapse for SSP scenarios extending to 2100 (Weijer et al., 2020), although some models show collapse for extreme hosing (Jackson et al., 2023; van Westen and Dijkstra, 2023) or warming (Hu et al., 2013). Climate models might underestimate AMOC stability, and whether AMOC actually can tip (collapse) under present conditions is still an open debate (see SI). Note that a prolonged quasi-stable shutdown or strong reduction in AMOC strength could have severe climate impacts lasting for decades or more (Fig. 4 of Loriani et al., 2023), even without actual tipping.

3.1.1 Drivers and Feedbacks

704 In the North Atlantic, global warming could cause buoyancy forcing, i.e. reduce surface water density
705 (and hence weaken and potentially tip AMOC) through surface warming and freshening. Freshening
706 could stem from an increase in precipitation minus evaporation, sea ice melt, or meltwater flux from
707 Greenland melting.
708 Gregory et al. (2016) found that for forcings derived from doubling CO₂ gradually over 70 years
709 (1pctCO₂), only heat flux changes lead to significant AMOC weakening, whereas freshwater flux other
710 than ice sheet runoff has no significant impact. However, Madan et al. (2023) suggests that for
711 instantaneous CO₂ quadrupling in CMIP6, freshwater forcing from sea ice melt weakens AMOC. Liu et
712 al. (2019) also suggested that changes in sea ice cover may impact AMOC through changes in
713 freshwater input (freezing, advection and melting of ice floes) and heat flux (e.g., shielding ocean water
714 from atmospheric influences); they find that sea ice retreat eventually weakens AMOC. Using an
715 intermediate complexity model, Golledge et al. (2019) found that future freshwater fluxes from
716 Greenland (and Antarctica) derived from ice sheet models under RCP8.5 forcing might weaken AMOC
717 by 3-4Sv. If AMOC can indeed tip, then icemelt would likely increase the probability. Atmospheric
718 circulation changes, e.g. North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), may also affect AMOC, for example by
719 introducing heat flux anomalies (Delworth and Zeng, 2016).

720

721 In the Southern Ocean, climate change might influence the position or strength of the westerly winds
722 potentially affecting AMOC's upwelling branch. However, changes in eddy fluxes might (partly)
723 compensate for the change in westerlies (Marshall and Speer, 2012).

724

725 It is uncertain if tipping into an off-state can be reached with climate forcings that can occur under
726 anthropogenic global warming. If so, buoyancy forcing, either from heat flux changes or freshwater
727 changes, is likely the key driver, as is the case for AMOC weakening.

728

729 Whilst the classic view is that a gradual change in forcing would eventually tip AMOC (Fig. 1a),
730 random fluctuations in buoyancy forcing might push AMOC into the off-state even if the tipping point
731 is not reached ("noise-induced tipping", Fig. 1c; Ditlevsen and Johnsen, 2010). In addition, it has been
732 suggested that fast changes in the buoyancy forcing may lead to rate-induced tipping (Fig. 1d; Lohmann
733 and Ditlevsen, 2021).

734

735 3.1.2 The impacts of SRM

736 SRM is likely to reduce most drivers of AMOC weakening. Using GeoMIP (Kravitz et al., 2011) data,
737 Xie et al., (2022) found that in the highly idealised G1 experiment, where the GMST effect of
738 instantaneous quadrupling of CO₂ is compensated by instantaneous solar dimming, the GHG effect on

739 heat flux in North Atlantic deep convection regions is Partially to Effectively compensated (3 models),
740 while the effect on precipitation minus evaporation is Effectively compensated to Overcompensated (6
741 models) and September sea ice loss is Effectively compensated (6 models). SRM is expected to Partially
742 to Effectively prevent Greenland tipping (Sect. 2.1), which suggests it may reduce freshwater input
743 from ice melt.

744

745 Several studies directly modelled the effect of SRM (or analogues) on AMOC weakening without
746 separating the effect on various drivers. Hassan et al. (2021) showed that anthropogenic aerosols, in
747 absence of Greenhouse forcing, increased AMOC by about 1.5Sv in the 1990s, with surface heat flux
748 dominating over freshwater flux. Xie et al. (2022) used simulations of various SRM methods, including
749 SAI, solar dimming, increasing ocean albedo (a rough proxy for Marine Cloud Brightening (MCB) or
750 for placing reflective foam on the water), and increasing cloud droplet number concentration (a simple
751 representation of MCB), and the strength varies from a modest reduction to complete elimination of
752 greenhouse-gas-induced warming. They found that in all cases, SRM reduces GHG-induced AMOC
753 weakening. If global mean surface temperature change is fully compensated (experiment G1), AMOC
754 strength is Effectively restored in the multi-model mean, with solar dimming performing slightly better
755 and MCB slightly worse than SAI. Note that in G1 there is no period of global warming, as solar
756 dimming starts simultaneously with CO₂ increase, while in reality, AMOC changes may be locked in
757 before SRM starts. Using the CESM2-WACCM model, Tilmes et al. (2020) found that if SRM is used
758 to cool RCP8.5 forcing back to 1.5 degrees from 2020, AMOC weakening is roughly halved compared
759 to RCP8.5 forcing without SRM compared to year 2020. In a previous model version, AMOC
760 weakening was even overcompensated by SRM, leading to AMOC strengthening (Fasullo et al., 2018;
761 Tilmes et al., 2018). This suggests that SRM's overall effect on AMOC weakening is Partial
762 compensation to Overcompensation. Given the similarity in drivers for AMOC weakening and tipping,
763 we assess the effect of SRM on AMOC tipping to be Partial to Overcompensation, too.

764

765 The potential rate-dependency of AMOC tipping (Lohmann and Ditlevsen, 2021) may imply that
766 strategies where SRM is used to reduce the rate of warming before being phased out may reduce the
767 risk of tipping the AMOC. However, it also implies that termination shock may increase the risk of
768 tipping compared to the same temperature rise without SRM. However, rate-dependent AMOC tipping
769 remains uncertain, so the possible effects of SRM on this mechanism remain uncertain too.
770 As for noise-induced tipping, it is unclear whether SRM would affect the amplitude of buoyancy
771 forcing noise. However, SRM may help to keep AMOC further from the tipping point, which would
772 reduce the susceptibility to noise-induced tipping.

773

774 It is difficult to understand to what extent SRM could restore the AMOC once tipping has begun, as no
775 model simulations exist. An extension of sea ice cover after AMOC tipping (or weakening) may shield
776 the ocean from surface cooling (van Westen and Dijkstra, 2023), rendering SRM less effective or
777 potentially counterproductive. Even if SRM can restore AMOC, very strong SRM might be required if
778 AMOC shows hysteresis, and this forcing may have to be applied for many decades, with potentially
779 detrimental consequences. Schwinger et al. (2022) demonstrate this by simulating the effect of
780 instantaneous CDR, and hence instant cooling, on a weakened (i.e. not even tipped) AMOC. AMOC
781 recovered, but during the transition period, the North Atlantic region was severely overcooled, as the
782 cooling effect of CDR already manifested itself, while AMOC was still weak. Pflüger et al. (2024)
783 simulate an abrupt SAI onset in 2080 and find that AMOC weakening is halted, but not reverted, by
784 2100, leading to prolonged overcooling in the North Atlantic. Attempts to restore a tipping or fully
785 tipped AMOC might lead to even more severe and extended overcooling. Conversely, potential attempts
786 to minimise overcooling by slowly ramping up SRM may conflict with requirements for preventing
787 other tipping points.

788 3.1.3 Further Research

789 Ongoing efforts of the AMOC research community may help to better understand AMOC instability
790 and its susceptibility to SRM. Improving climate models may reduce biases, in particular potentially
791 excessive AMOC stability, and hopefully eventually enable us to directly simulate SRM's impact on
792 AMOC tipping. Meanwhile, qualitative insights on SRM's effect on potential AMOC tipping might be
793 gained by using simulations with extreme forcings (warming and/or freshwater) which actually tip
794 AMOC, and investigate whether SRM can postpone or revert tipping.

795

796 Another research avenue could be to chart more systematically the impact of SRM on AMOC drivers,
797 including in the South. This requires disentangling the direct effect of SRM forcing from AMOC
798 feedbacks (Hassan et al, 2021). Impacts on drivers likely depend on the SRM method (e.g. SAI or
799 alternatives) and strategy (e.g. timing, intensity and location of injection points). Note that even if
800 AMOC can not tip, SRM's impact on AMOC weakening remains an important research subject.

801

802 3.2 North Atlantic Sub-Polar Gyre Collapse

803 There are indications that deep convection in the subpolar gyre (SPG) in the North Atlantic may
804 collapse without full AMOC collapse, although it is uncertain whether the SPG is a tipping element (see
805 SI).

806

807 3.2.1 Drivers and Feedbacks

808 As is the case for AMOC, the main drivers are surface warming and processes leading to surface
809 freshening. Sgubin et al. (2017) and Swingedouw et al. (2021) leaning on Born and Stocker (2014),
810 suggest the following mechanism for SPG collapse: First, the SPG gradually freshens due to enhanced
811 precipitation and runoff caused by intensified hydrological cycle under global warming; meltwater from
812 Greenland could provide additional freshening, and surface warming might further reduce surface
813 density. Once threshold stratification is reached, deep convection is strongly reduced in the (western)
814 SPG, preventing winter cooling and further reducing the density in the interior of the gyre. Less dense
815 water in the interior of SPG means weaker gyre circulation because of thermal wind effects; this in turn
816 leads to reduced salt import from tropics and hence additional freshening. SPG collapse can occur
817 without AMOC collapse, but the two may influence each other.

818 3.2.2: The impact of SRM

819 SRM's effect on the drivers is similar to the discussion in Sect. 3.1, although the relative importance of
820 these drivers may differ.

821

822 Direct simulations of SRM's effect on the SPG are extremely scarce, with Pflüger et al. (2024) being the
823 only study at date - to the authors' knowledge - to analyse the impact of SRM on SPG tipping. They
824 show that in CESM2, the SPG collapses under an RCP8.5 scenario, but deep convection is preserved in
825 the eastern part of the SPG if SRM is used to stabilise GMST at 1.5°C above pre-industrial. We
826 conjecture that SRM might at least partially counteract SPG collapse by reducing or reverting buoyancy
827 forcing in the subpolar North Atlantic.

828

829 To our knowledge, no study has explicitly simulated SPG recovery due to SRM. Plüger et al. (2024)
830 find that, when cooling an RCP8.5 scenario down to 1.5°C from 2080 using SAI, SPG convection
831 remains in the collapsed state at least for several decades.

832 3.2.3: Further Research

833 Some possible research avenues overlap with AMOC (sect 3.1.3), including improving process
834 understanding in the North Atlantic and quantifying SRM's impact on drivers there. As opposed to
835 AMOC weakening (Xie et al., 2022), to our knowledge SPG changes have not been systematically
836 reviewed in GeoMIP data. As some climate models actually simulate SPG tipping, targeted

837 experiments could be performed in these models, e.g. applying SRM some time before the tipping to
838 test SRM's preventative potential, and after the tipping, to assess reversibility.

839 **3.3 Antarctic Overturning Circulation and Bottom Water formation**

840 Antarctic Bottom Water (AABW) is a very cold and moderately salty water mass that forms around
841 Antarctica by ocean heat loss (especially in ice-free areas, where water is exposed to very cold katabatic
842 winds from Antarctica) and brine rejection during sea ice formation. It sinks to great depth, filling the
843 abyssal ocean and constituting the lower branch of the lower Atlantic circulation cell (Fig. 2, process 5).
844 Process understanding is still limited, as most climate models do not resolve small-scale processes such
845 as circulation in ice shelf cavities, and meltwater input from Antarctica is typically not included
846 (Fox-Kemper *et al.*, 2021). Observational and modelling evidence suggest a future weakening of
847 AABW formation, and AABW formation collapse has been listed as a potential tipping point
848 (Armstrong McKay *et al.*, 2022; Loriani *et al.*, 2023; see also SI).

849 **3.3.1: Drivers and Feedbacks**

850 A modelling study by Li *et al.* (2023a) finds that the major driver of AABW formation decline is
851 meltwater input from Antarctica, which freshens the surface water flowing towards Antarctica (point (5)
852 in Fig. 4) and inhibits sinking. In contrast, another modelling study (Zhou *et al.*, 2023) finds that AABW
853 formation in the Weddell sea has declined due to a decrease in southerly winds near the ice shelf edge,
854 which push sea ice away from the shelf edge, thereby enabling surface cooling in the open water and
855 sea ice production and hence brine rejection, both of which help increase density. The study suggests
856 that the local wind changes are at least partly driven by natural variability over the Pacific, transferred
857 through teleconnections. In addition, global warming is predicted to cause an intensification and
858 southward shift of the westerlies around Antarctica (Goyal *et al.*, 2021), leading to intensified upwelling
859 of warm water around Antarctica. Dias *et al.* (2021) suggest that this may reduce sea ice cover and
860 enhance surface cooling, convection and ultimately AABW formation, although this may be
861 overestimated in models with overly large stretches of open ocean. Note that ocean warming around
862 Antarctica is also expected to accelerate ice loss (Sect. 2.2) and hence freshwater input, which would
863 again reduce AABW production (Q. Li *et al.*, 2023).

864 **3.3.2: The impact of SRM**

865 To our knowledge, no dedicated studies exist on the effect of SRM on AABW tipping. We conjecture
866 that SRM's effectiveness to mitigate AABW tipping depends on its ability to counter drivers, especially

melting of land and sea ice (Sects.. 2.2 and 2.5). As outlined in Sect. 2.2, depending on the injection strategy, SAI may have limited effects on preventing the intensification and southward shift of the westerlies. It may thus fail to revert land ice melt, which exacerbates AABW loss, but also sea ice loss, which allows wider open stretches for convection and AABW formation (Sect. 3.3.1). SRM's influence on secondary drivers, including Antarctic wind changes through teleconnections, may modify the outcome and is hard to predict; we currently do not have modelling of the impact of SRM on these winds. Given large uncertainties and the fact that SRM may affect various drivers in ways that may counteract each other, we cannot predict the sign of the overall effect. We also have no evidence as to whether SRM could reverse AABW tipping once started.

3.2.3: Further Research

Better understanding of processes determining AABW formation, and reducing model uncertainty, is key. Given the dependence on Antarctic ice melt, as well as its relation with the AMOC, understanding the impact of SRM on both of those tipping elements is also important. Finally, understanding the impact of SRM on Antarctic winds and the teleconnections that drive them may also be important if these prove to be influential in driving long-term trends of AABW formation.

4: Atmosphere

4.1: Marine Stratocumulus Cloud

Marine stratocumulus clouds are low-altitude clouds that form primarily in the sub-tropics, covering approximately 20% of the low-latitude ocean or 6.5% of the Earth's surface. Due to their location, high albedo and low-altitude they produce a very substantial local forcing of up to -100 Wm^{-2} (Klein and Hartmann, 1993). Recent work has shown that these clouds exhibit multiple equilibrium states and that at sufficiently high Sea-Surface Temperatures (SST) or CO_2 concentrations they can transition from a cloudy to a non-cloudy state (Bellon and Geoffroy, 2016; Salazar and Tziperman, 2023; Schneider et al., 2019). The break-up of these cloud decks would be associated with substantial local and global temperature increases, with Schneider et al. (2019) finding a 10°C warming within the affected domain and an enormous 8°C global warming in response in their highly idealised setup.

893 **4.1.1: Drivers and Feedbacks**

894 Unlike most types of clouds, the convection that produces marine stratocumulus clouds originates at the
895 cloud-top and is driven by longwave radiative cooling (Turton and Nicholls, 1987). If this longwave
896 cooling is sufficiently strong, air parcels from the cloud top descend all the way to the ocean surface
897 producing a well-mixed boundary layer that connects the cloud layer with its moisture source
898 (Schneider et al., 2019). These cloud decks will break up if this longwave cooling weakens to such an
899 extent that the descending air parcels can no longer reach the ocean surface (Salazar & Tziperman,
900 2023). This can occur if the longwave emissivity of the overlying atmospheric layer increases
901 sufficiently, i.e., if GHG concentrations or water vapour content rise sufficiently (Schneider et al.,
902 2019). It can also occur if too much of the warm, dry air from the overlying inversion layer is mixed
903 into the cloud as this would dehydrate the cloud, reducing its emissivity and hence the longwave
904 cooling that sustains it (Bretherton and Wyant, 1997).

905

906 Using a cloud-resolving Large Eddy Simulation of a patch of marine stratocumulus coupled to a tropical
907 atmospheric column model, Schneider et al. (2019) found that if CO₂ concentrations rose above 1200
908 ppm there was a sudden transition from a cloudy to a non-cloudy state and a substantial local and global
909 warming. As the feedbacks associated with this warming make it more difficult for these clouds to form,
910 this transition exhibited considerable hysteresis, with CO₂ concentrations needing to be brought back
911 below 300 ppm for the system to return to the cloudy state. Salazar and Tziperman (2023) reproduced
912 this hysteresis in an idealised mixed layer cloud model, finding multiple equilibria between 500 and
913 1750 ppm.

914 **4.1.2: The impact of SRM**

915 In a follow-up study, Schneider et al. (2020) found that whilst reducing insolation to offset some of the
916 warming from elevated CO₂ concentrations did not eliminate this hysteresis, the critical threshold for
917 marine stratocumulus break-up is raised from >1200 ppm in their CO₂-only runs to >1700 ppm. The
918 increase in global temperatures is reduced from ~8 °C to ~5 °C, though CO₂ concentrations must still be
919 brought below 300 ppm to restore the clouds.

920

921 However, the reduction in insolation that they imposed in their simulations only offset roughly half of
922 the warming from their elevated CO₂ concentrations. While simulations by the GeoMIP found that a
923 reduction of between 1.75 and 2.5% was needed to offset each doubling of CO₂ concentrations (Kravitz
924 et al., 2013), Schneider et al. (2020) applied only a 3.7 Wm⁻² reduction for every doubling of CO₂ to the
925 471 Wm⁻² of incoming sunlight in their sub-tropical domain, i.e., a 0.8% reduction. As warming

926 increases the latent heat flux from the surface that leads to greater cloud-top turbulence and the
927 dehydration of the clouds, and it leads to increased water vapour in the overlying inversion layer, the
928 residual warming in these SRM simulations substantially weakens the longwave cooling that sustains
929 the clouds. This may suggest that if Schneider et al. (2020) had reduced incoming sunlight sufficiently
930 to eliminate the residual warming in their simulations they would have found a much higher critical CO₂
931 threshold in their SRM case.

932

933 Some support for this conclusion on the effects of this residual warming can be found in the sensitivity
934 tests of Salazar and Tziperman (2023). In one case (in Fig. 4, row 2 in Salazar and Tziperman (2023))
935 they eliminate the water vapour feedback from their model, breaking the association between
936 temperature and emissivity in the inversion layer, and find that the critical CO₂ threshold for marine
937 stratocumulus collapse is more than doubled from 1750 to >4000 ppm. However, in this case they still
938 have elevated sea surface temperatures, and so a greater latent heat flux from the surface than would be
939 the case if SRM fully offset the warming.

940

941 While SRM would not address the reduction in longwave cooling caused by elevated GHG
942 concentrations, it would be effective in lowering temperatures, reducing the water vapour feedback and
943 the increase in turbulence caused by increased latent heat flux from a warmer ocean surface. As such
944 SRM would substantially raise the critical CO₂ threshold for marine stratocumulus from a very high
945 CO₂ concentration to an extremely high CO₂ concentration.

946 4.1.3: Further Research

947 To date there has been very little research into this potential tipping point, as such further research in a
948 wider range of models is needed to determine whether it is a robust feature of marine stratocumulus
949 decks. As the CO₂ concentrations and temperatures required to produce this tipping point may have
950 occurred at certain points in the past, e.g., the Paleocene-Eocene Thermal Maxima (Schneider et al.,
951 2019), future research could address whether observations and model simulations of this period are
952 consistent with this potential tipping point.

953 To assess SRM's potential to address this tipping point more fully, a wider range of SRM simulations
954 than those in Schneider et al. (2020) could be conducted. For SAI, such simulations should include the
955 effects not present in sun-dimming experiments, such as stratospheric heating, and should cover a range
956 of scenarios with different levels of GHG forcing where SAI offsets all warming. Studies assessing
957 MCB's potential to address this tipping point would also be particularly worthwhile as MCB would

958 directly modify marine stratocumulus clouds, changing the cloud microphysics in ways which may
959 affect the threshold for collapse.

960 **5: Biosphere**

961 **5.1: The Impacts of SRM on ecological systems in general**

962 Tipping points have been extensively discussed in the ecological literature (Jiang et al., 2019a), and
963 ecological systems in the tipping literature (Lenton et al., 2023). Ecologists refer to tipping points for
964 complete system changes either in the dominant, foundational or keystone species, in the life forms or
965 functional types of the plants (e.g. from trees to grasses), to large changes in the community of
966 organisms present (e.g. diverse native species community to monocultures of an invasive species), or in
967 the physical structure of an environment (wetland or aquatic to dry land, deep soil to eroded rock
968 substrate). Moreover, the ecological literature refers to tipping points not only with respect to such
969 changes at the system level (which we focus on here), but also to the point at which the extinction of an
970 individual species becomes inevitable (Osmond and Klausmeier, 2017). Such changes may be driven by
971 self-sustaining drivers and positive feedbacks, or to sudden or persistent drivers without positive
972 feedbacks (Fig. 1).

973

974 The losses of biodiversity locally, regionally and globally in the last half century, accelerating in recent
975 years, has particularly focused attention on tipping points resulting in biological losses. Ecological
976 systems are typically driven over tipping points by a complex series of drivers - including non-climatic
977 drivers (Lenton *et al.* 2023) - rather than single dominant drivers from local to global spatial scales, and
978 SRM is likely to change many environmental factors affecting these systems (Liang et al., 2022).
979 Greater uncertainty of knowledge of climate impacts at local and regional scales can make
980 understanding the impacts of particular climatic changes difficult, and exploitation and land-use change,
981 amongst other anthropogenic factors, can interact to make these systems more susceptible to
982 climate-driven tipping.

983

984 There has been very little research on the impacts of SRM on complex ecosystems. The clearest clues as
985 to whether SRM can prevent ecological tipping points lie in its central role of reducing global average
986 warming (albeit with regional uncertainties), and thus those ecological systems that suffer most from the
987 direct impact of increased temperatures might potentially benefit from SRM-induced cooling and evade
988 temperature-forced tipping points. However, responses such as species distributions, species interactions
989 (e.g. pollination), and ecosystem processes such as net primary productivity may be more affected by

specific aspects of weather and climate that directly impact organisms. These may include reductions in precipitation or changes in seasonality of precipitation relative to temperatures, increases in peak extreme temperatures, which are generally reduced by SRM (Kuswanto et al., 2022), reductions or loss of freezing temperatures and increase in nighttime temperatures, which are reduced substantially, but not fully, by SRM (Zarnetske et al., 2021), and other factors including growing season duration, and consecutive days of extreme temperatures. Some factors affected by temperature may drive ecological effects in opposite directions as well; for example cooling may suppress photosynthesis due to a drop in productivity or increase it if the suppression of heat stress is more significant (Zarnetske et al., 2021). Thus even for the factor where we best understand the climatic effects of SRM, the effects on pulling them back from, or pushing them over, tipping points, remain challenging to predict.

1000

Changes to the hydrological cycle under SRM are central to plant productivity, growth, survival and reproduction. However, large uncertainties in the simulated hydrological consequences of different SRM schemes (Ricke et al., 2023) preclude a simple answer as to whether a SRM scheme would alleviate or exacerbate hydrological-related drivers of tipping. It will be critical to understand both observed and modelled ecological responses to changes in precipitation and atmospheric drought (e.g. vapour pressure deficit) for SRM scenarios to better anticipate changes that can drive or prevent ecological tipping.

1008

SRM would also affect other factors in novel ways when compared to climate change. Whilst temperatures would be kept artificially low, CO₂ levels may remain high or rise, with profound impacts on terrestrial and marine ecosystems (Zarnetske et al., 2021). Diffuse to direct light ratios would be enhanced under SRM, potentially enhancing or otherwise altering photosynthesis for photosynthetic organisms (Xia et al., 2016).

1014

Other factors besides average global temperatures are sensitive to the exact configuration of the deployment scheme of SRM. Changes in SRM scenarios may have profoundly different impacts on ecosystems. For example, if SRM were to continue for decades and then be suddenly terminated while CO₂ continued to increase, the termination effects on ecological systems (Ito, 2017; Trisos et al., 2018) would be so disruptive that tipping points would almost certainly be precipitated for many ecological systems, as many of these are examples of rate-dependent tipping (Fig. 2). The latitude(s) of injection sites would influence many aspects of climate relevant to potential ecological tipping points, including movement of the Hadley cells and the arctic-to-tropic temperature gradient (Cheng et al., 2022; Smyth et al., 2017).

1024 5.2: Tropical Forests: Amazon Rainforest Collapse

1025 The Amazon basin is a region of many different tropical forest ecological systems and high biodiversity.
1026 It is a key Earth system component (Armstrong McKay et al., 2022), regulating regional and even
1027 global climates (Wunderling et al., 2024) by cycling enormous amounts of water vapour and latent heat
1028 between land and atmosphere, by storing around 150–200 Pg carbon above and below ground, though
1029 this is in decline (Brienen et al., 2015). As such, it is perhaps better to see the Amazon basin as a
1030 combined ecological-climatic system.

1031

1032 It is predicted that 2-6°C of global warming (relative to preindustrial), and even less when considering
1033 interactions with other human activities such as clearcutting and fires, might force a tipping point for the
1034 Amazon basin to the replacement of tropical forest with systems without trees or with fewer, scattered
1035 trees and without continuous canopies (Lenton et al. 2023). Indeed, whilst the Amazon has a series of
1036 local tipping elements within it, these can be considered to be connected by the atmospheric moisture
1037 recycling feedback, where intercepted precipitation and transpiration allows evapotranspiration from the
1038 forest to be recycled into precipitation elsewhere. This spatially connects the different local tipping
1039 points together, potentially allowing for tipping cascades through each of the local elements
1040 (Wunderling et al., 2022b).

1041 5.2.1: Drivers and Feedbacks

1042 As is the case for most highly diverse tropical forests globally (e.g., the Dipterocarp forests of Southeast
1043 Asia, SI), the forests of the Amazon are affected by multiple interacting factors that together may
1044 precipitate tipping. The major climatic driver behind this tipping point is drought caused by decreasing
1045 precipitation and increasing evaporation in this region during the dry season under global warming,
1046 whilst annual precipitation changes seem of limited importance (Wunderling et al., 2022b). Secondary
1047 drivers related to warming include more widespread and frequent occurrence of extreme heatwaves
1048 (Costa et al., 2022; Jiménez-Muñoz et al., 2016) that cause tree and animal mortalities either directly or
1049 indirectly through increased wildfires and droughts. Feedbacks are likely to cause or accelerate such a
1050 tipping point because as global climate change induced drought kills areas of forest, the precipitation
1051 those trees had cycled back to the atmosphere disappears, furthering drought and killing more forest.
1052 Studies have found that vegetation-climate feedbacks in the Amazon could be significant in tipping. For
1053 example, Zemp et al. (2017) illustrated a feedback loop of reduced rainfall causing an increased risk of
1054 forest dieback causing forest loss induced intensification of regional droughts that self-amplifies forest
1055 loss in the Amazon basin. Staal et al. (2020) further delineated a bistable state of forests in the southern

1056 Amazon, which are most susceptible to the drought-dieback feedback loop that would tip these forests
1057 to a savanna-like non-forested state.

1058

1059 Fire is another major driver of tipping, driven by climatic and non-climatic sources, which is raised in
1060 significance if micro-climatic inertia is important (Malhi et al., 2009). The increase in human activity
1061 and forest fragmentation increases the proximity of much of the forest to anthropogenic ignition points,
1062 which as the forest dries is the limiting factor in fire frequency, increasing the likelihood of tipping
1063 (Malhi et al., 2009). The impact of deforestation and degradation is the final significant driver of
1064 tipping (Lenton et al., 2023), which not only causes increased vulnerability to other tipping drivers
1065 (Wunderling et al., 2022b), as well as definitionally causing localised state changes, but via cascades
1066 may itself be a key driver of changes to the combined ecological-climatic system in the Amazon basin
1067 (Boers et al., 2017).

1068

1069 Some researchers have suggested that ecosystems capable of developing Turing patterns might have
1070 multistability with many partly vegetated states, which may enhance resilience and lower irreversibility
1071 (Rietkerk et al., 2021); it is unknown how SRM would enhance or detract from this resilience, so these
1072 will not be discussed further.

1073

1074 Some changes in oceanic and atmospheric circulations due to climate change could also have indirect,
1075 beneficial effects on the resilience of Amazon forests. For example, the possible AMOC collapse with
1076 elevated warming (Sect. 3.1) is projected to shift the Intertropical Convergence Zone southwards
1077 (Orihuela-Pinto et al., 2022) and cause increased rainfall and decreased temperature in most parts of the
1078 Amazon, which would stabilise eastern Amazonian rainforests (Nian et al., 2023) by mitigating the
1079 above-mentioned drought-dieback feedback loop.

1080 **5.2.2: The impact of SRM**

1081 Limited research makes predicting the effects of SRM on Amazon tipping deeply uncertain, given that it
1082 is highly dependent on a number of factors, some poorly understood, and that some of the conditions
1083 created by SRM are novel. In addition, large areas of the Amazon are poorly studied, and the climatic
1084 drivers are not fully understood (Carvalho et al., 2023). We know that Amazon forests are highly
1085 dependent on regional precipitation and are particularly sensitive to drought. GCMs can be used to
1086 provide insight to understand the large-scale impacts of SRM, but tropical forests commonly depend not
1087 only on global circulation patterns, but also may depend on regional changes including monsoon
1088 dynamics and thus the movement of the Hadley cells, and on convection-forest interactions, which are
1089 often inadequately captured in models (indeed, GCMs often disagree on even the sign of these regional

precipitation change). Moreover, the effects are likely to depend on the specifics of the particular SRM scenario, and different SRM approaches may have very different regional and local meteorological and ecological consequences even if they aim for similar global average temperatures (Fan et al., 2021). Changes in relative humidity and vapour pressure deficit are also important for forest function (Grossiord et al., 2020), with vapour pressure deficit generally decreasing under SRM and thus alleviating atmospheric aridity and stomatal stress even with reduced precipitation (Fan et al., 2021). Whether global warming is increasing land aridity or not is a highly debated topic (Berg and McColl, 2021) and in light of this, whether SRM would alleviate or exacerbate aridity (including Amazon drying) is likewise highly uncertain. Moreover, effects may be in different directions; for example, given SRM could stabilise the AMOC (Sect. 3.1.2), this would aid the tipping process, even when other effects may help prevent it. Because SRM would not reverse climate change but would create novel environmental conditions, predicting the consequences beyond lowered temperatures in Amazon forests is extremely difficult. For example, in contrast to same-temperature conditions obtained by CO₂ reduction, SRM would result in lower temperature but elevated CO₂ levels, and changes in direct/diffuse light ratio, with currently poorly understood vegetation responses.

Jones et al. (2018) used models of SAI deployment to keep temperature to 1.5°C above preindustrial, and found that Amazon drying is very imperfectly compensated for by the deployment, although it is reduced relative to same-emission scenarios. The compensation is better in the East Amazon, where tipping concern under climate change is the greatest, than the West Amazon. They suggest that this is because much of the hydrology of the Amazon is controlled by changes to annual-mean photosynthetic activity and stomatal conductance, which are driven by elevated atmospheric CO₂ levels as well as temperature. These may also be impacted by the type of light, although this was not explored in the study. Simpson et al. (2019) see precipitation reductions over the Amazon in GLENS that are equal to that of the comparative non-SAI scenario (RCP8.5), although soil moisture is greater under SRM than RCP8.5, as evapotranspiration is suppressed. This P-E reduction was also seen in Jones et al (2018). However, this analysis is limited as it looks at annual precipitation rather than droughts, with the latter a much stronger driver of Amazon tipping. Touma et al. (2023) uses an SAI scheme to keep temperature close to 1.5°C above pre-industrial, and sees increases in drying and fires in the West Amazon when compared to SSP2-4.5, whilst a reduction in fires in Northeast Brazil, which includes part of the East Amazon. However, drought severity is found to increase slightly for both regions under SRM when compared to SSP2-4.5. In general, the East Amazon is the area of greatest concern for tipping behaviour under climate change (Malhi et al., 2009), so in our overall judgement we have weighted the impact of SRM on this region higher, although the possibility of cascades through the

1124 atmospheric-moisture recycling feedback means that the drying in the West Amazon cannot be ruled out
1125 as precipitating regional tipping.

1126

1127 Whilst this may give some indication of possible regional climatic effects, the reliability of these results
1128 in such a complex system which GCMs struggle to represent is questionable so the effect SRM has on
1129 Amazon tipping remains highly uncertain. Moreover, SRM does not affect deforestation or the
1130 proximity of the rainforest to ignition sources, which are key drivers of tipping.

1131 5.2.3: Further Research

1132 In light of the complexity of the ecological system and regional- to micro-climatology in the Amazon,
1133 more research is needed to better represent bioclimatological (vegetation-climate interaction) processes
1134 in GCMs and their land surface models in order to constrain future projects of the impact of SRM on
1135 Amazon forest tipping. Better monitoring of and incorporating spatial data on land use change in the
1136 Amazon basin and more widely in tropical forests globally is essential for realistic predictions;
1137 increasing the number of monitoring stations and continued archiving of satellite imagery of the
1138 Amazon microclimate and forest health status is critical for enriching empirical knowledge of this
1139 unique system to support model development (Carvalho et al., 2023). Better understanding of the
1140 relationship between phylogenetic diversity and plant functional traits, and their heterogeneity across
1141 the Amazon Basin will facilitate more accurate predictions of responses to climate change and the
1142 effects of SRM in promoting or reducing incipient tipping points. The contrasting effects of SRM on
1143 hydrological aridity (precipitation and soil moisture) and atmospheric aridity (vapour pressure deficit),
1144 and their competing effects on forest health is also worth attention in assessing the overall effect of
1145 SRM on the Amazon system. Furthermore, better understanding the importance of droughts and fires in
1146 different regions to overall Amazon dieback, may allow us to constrain the effect of the differential
1147 regional impacts of SRM on the tipping element as a whole.

1148 5.3: Shallow-Sea Tropical Coral Reefs

1149 Corals are invertebrate animals belonging to thousands of species in the phylum Cnidaria, living in a
1150 range of marine environments. A reef is built up by the excretion of calcium carbonate from millions of
1151 coral polyps, which keep building up toward the light, leaving the coral reef structure underneath. The
1152 structure created by the corals creates a massive habitat for many other organisms. Tipping in
1153 shallow-water tropical coral reefs results in the establishment of an entirely different biotic and physical
1154 community space, often dominated by macroalgae without these hard skeletons (Holbrook et al., 2016).

1155 More recent work has highlighted the presence of multiple stable states if fish are considered alongside
1156 benthic functional groups (Jouffray et al., 2019).

1157 5.3.1: Drivers and Mechanisms

1158 Ocean warming is a primary driver of shallow-sea tropical coral reef tipping, normally via sustained
1159 high temperature events causing coral bleaching (Fox-Kemper *et al.*, 2021). During these events, corals
1160 will expel their symbiotic photosynthetic dinoflagellates; if they are bleached for extended periods of
1161 time, this can result in death (Wang et al., 2023). If the corals are then replaced by other organisms,
1162 chiefly macroalgae, then a transition to an entirely new stable state can occur (Schmitt et al., 2019). It
1163 sometimes may be possible for the scleractinian coral to reestablish themselves after mass mortality
1164 events. However, warming is projected to outpace the adaptive capacity of corals with recurrent
1165 bleaching events making recovery very difficult, causing transitions to a second stable state to be more
1166 likely (Hughes et al., 2017). Other interactions such as a drop in herbivory may make it easier for the
1167 macroalgae to become established, further promoting tipping (Holbrook et al., 2016).

1168
1169 Acidification is a secondary driver of tipping. As more CO₂ dissolves in ocean water aragonite
1170 saturation levels drop, so calcification by the polyps decreases, leading corals to either reduce their
1171 skeletal growth, keep the same rate of skeletal growth but reduce skeletal density increasing
1172 susceptibility to erosion, or to keep the same skeletal density and rate of growth whilst diverting
1173 resources away from other essential functions (Hoegh-Guldberg et al., 2007). Dead coral structures are
1174 also dissolved or eroded at a faster rate in more acidic water, further reducing reef functioning.
1175 Nonetheless, the relationship between increased acidification and decreased calcification is complex
1176 with studies equivocal over how strong this relationship is, as well as how important non-pH factors are
1177 in changes to calcification rate (Mollica et al., 2018). The response of coral calcification to acidification
1178 is generally linear and highly species specific, so a simple ‘coral acidification tipping point’ does not
1179 exist. Other factors, such as internal pH regulation, may have physiological tipping points, but manifest
1180 as linear decreases at an ecosystem-wide level. However, coral reefs are complex communities with
1181 non-coral species playing important roles, and whilst most acidification impacts are linear, there does
1182 seem to be some evidence of tipping on a local scale due to the indirect effects of acidification on the
1183 overall health of the community in specific habitats, particularly those with an already high pCO₂
1184 (Cornwall et al., 2024). Nonetheless, these are unlikely to manifest as a global, near-synchronous,
1185 tipping point.

1186
1187 Other factors may also contribute to coral tipping. Storm intensity is expected to increase under
1188 warming, causing physical damage to the reef which recovery may be difficult from (Gardner et al.,

2005; Mudge and Bruno, 2023). Sea level rise, if it outpaces the coral's ability to track, which may be the case due to the other factors mentioned, can promote increases in sedimentation. However, (Brown et al., 2019) find sea level rise promotes reef growth, likely by allowing space for the reef to grow, reducing aerial exposure and exposure to turbid waters. A variety of non-climatic or CO₂ related anthropogenic factors are also important. Jouffray et al. (2019) identified a number of different stressors on Hawaiian coral reefs, including fishing and pollution, and finds in certain regime shifts this has been a more important driver than climatic factors. Moreover, diseases (Alvarez-Filip et al., 2022) and invasive species (Pettay et al., 2015), often associated with warming and global trade, also have negative impacts on the structure, functioning and stability of coral reefs such as those found in the Caribbean.

5.3.2: The impact of SRM

SRM would help to reduce coral reefs tipping by reducing ocean temperatures (Couce et al., 2013), thus likely reducing the frequency of bleaching events. SRM may increase acidification somewhat by decreasing pH and aragonite saturation relative to the same emissions pathway without SRM, due to cooler water having a higher CO₂ solubility (Couce et al., 2013). However, Jin et al. (2022) argues that it is more complex; temperature decreases tend to increase pH and aragonite saturation for a given pCO₂ (Cao et al., 2009), whilst cooler temperatures generally reduce calcification and thus lead to lower pH and aragonite saturations. Their results suggest that whilst pH is slightly increased under SRM, aragonite saturation, the key variable of interest, is negligibly affected; thus we should expect SRM to have a close to negligible impact on the acidification driver of coral tipping.

SRM is likely to decrease the intensity of tropical storms, although with low confidence (Moore et al., 2015). Wang et al. (2018) find that SRM decreases the number of tropical cyclones relative to the same emissions pathway without SRM, although it does increase in the South Pacific, and so its overall impact on coral reef tipping is unclear. The impact is also heavily scenario dependent (Jones et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2018).

The impact of SRM on the incoming radiation, both by reducing the amount of direct radiation and increasing the diffuse radiation, is also likely to impact photosynthesis but any effect on tipping behaviour of photosynthetic organisms is likely to be minimal due to the cancellation effects between direct and diffuse radiation changes induced by SRM (Durand et al., 2021; Fan et al., 2021; Shao et al., 2020). These studies, however, were carried out in terrestrial environments, so the effect on zooxanthellae algae may be different. Non-climatic or CO₂ related anthropogenic drivers will be unaffected by SRM.

1223

1224 Couce et al. (2013) finds that suitability for reef conditions are improved under SRM when compared to
1225 same emission pathway scenarios, although worse than same temperature scenarios generated through
1226 mitigation. However, conditions in much of the Pacific improved relative to present day. Zhang et al.,
1227 (2017) specifically look at Caribbean coral reefs, and find that coral bleaching is significantly reduced
1228 by SRM due to its effect in allowing temperature to remain below the critical threshold for corals.
1229 Moreover, SRM is seen to reduce the frequency of Category 5 hurricanes, and whilst the recurrence
1230 time is increased, this is not enough to fully offset the impacts of climate change. Relative to the same
1231 emission pathway scenarios, both studies see SAI as reducing the likelihood of coral reef tipping,
1232 although they both report an undercompensation for the changes seen due to climate change.

1233

1234 There has also been interest in the use of MCB in combating bleaching, particularly short-term use
1235 around bleaching events (Tollefson, 2021). Theoretically, such a programme ought to reduce bleaching
1236 on the corals, although full analysis of the limited field experiments carried out have not yet shown if
1237 the technology is capable of attaining the necessary cooling.

1238 5.3.3 Further Research

1239 Given the high level of temperature dependence of the climatic drivers, our understanding of the
1240 direction of the impact of SRM on coral reef tipping is quite strong, and so further research is here less
1241 of a priority than other tipping elements. Nonetheless, the lack of modelling studies, combined with the
1242 presence of uncertainties (such as the difference in SRM impact across regions) and co-drivers
1243 alongside temperature (such as bleaching) might indicate that up-to-date ESM studies of SRM's impact
1244 on coral reefs would be useful. Studies of how much SRM might be necessary and what deployment
1245 design is needed to keep below critical thresholds of Degree Heating Week and recurrence times, as
1246 well as the impacts on storm intensity would be useful too. We also lack the understanding whether
1247 reducing the temperature driver is sufficient to stop tipping if other drivers of tipping are severe enough.
1248 The interest in regional MCB to avoid tipping would also require further research to test if proposed
1249 schemes are feasible. Similarly, better research with how other reef restoration strategies may interact
1250 with SRM to reduce the probability of tipping, or may reduce its counterfactual impact, may also be
1251 important for the most realistic assessment.

1252 5.4: The Himalaya-to-Sundarbans (HTS) Hydro-ecological System

1253 There is a vast region that extends from the glaciers of the Himalaya through their foothills, to a riparian
1254 network of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna Rivers with their extensive river basins, ending in the

1255 enormous wetlands of the Sundarbans in the Bay of Bengal. It includes areas partially or entirely within
1256 five different nations (India, China, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan) with between 400 -750 million
1257 people (depending on how one defines its boundary). This large system includes a range of glacial and
1258 contrasting ecological realms, and the different parts of this system have typically been treated
1259 separately and viewed as being independent components. Consequently it has been assumed that while
1260 there might be localised tipping in these different components (for example, in the glaciers of the
1261 Himalaya) resulting from different drivers in response to climate change (as for sea level rise for the
1262 Sundarbans), there would be no systemic response and no generalised tipping of the entire system.

1263 Here we suggest, for the first time, that the HTS hydro-ecological system is a plausible candidate as a
1264 single, integrated regional impact tipping element, according to our definition of tipping process in
1265 multi-dimensional systems (Fig. 1f), although this tipping process may appear different from the
1266 better-known and possibly simpler forcing-driven tipping processes (Fig. 1a,b) in other more familiar
1267 tipping elements as established by (Armstrong McKay et al., 2022; Lenton et al., 2008). We present this
1268 as an alternative hypothesis to that of the independent tipping of its components, and present an
1269 argument that the systemic tipping hypothesis proposed here bears more investigation. The ecological
1270 and socio-cultural importance of the HTS hydro-ecological system means that the impact of SRM on
1271 tipping in this system, regardless of the scale of said tipping, should be seriously evaluated, and we
1272 suggest that this subcontinental system, while poorly understood and understudied, may possibly be an
1273 integrated if underappreciated component of the Earth System.

1274 The diverse ecological systems in the HTS are dependent on the interconnections between the
1275 glacial-riparian network originating from Himalayan glaciers, the monsoon, and on the interface
1276 between the marine and terrestrial environments at the deltas of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna
1277 Rivers in the Sundarbans. The HTS as a whole includes important biodiversity hotspots, including the
1278 eastern Himalaya/southwestern China (Sharma et al., 2009) and the Sundarbans. The Sundarbans are
1279 the largest and most biodiverse mangrove wetlands in the world. Analogous to coral reefs, the
1280 mangroves form a living physical structure that creates habitat that supports many other species and
1281 complex species interactions (Raha et al., 2012; Sievers et al., 2020). We chose to highlight the HTS
1282 system to bring attention to the potential for SRM to impact this ecologically and socially important
1283 system. We also hope to illustrate how our approach can allow for evidence informed hypotheses on the
1284 effects of SRM of systems where the possibility of systemic tipping is very uncertain and
1285 under-evidenced, and to illustrate how other complex and multidimensional ecological systems might
1286 plausibly show broad systemic tipping.

1287 We hypothesise that changes to water variability and availability due to climate change might be a
1288 plausible trigger of systematic tipping to multi-dimensional alternative stable states (Fig. 1f) in this

1289 potentially integrated system. This mosaic of habitats and biomes is interconnected and interdependent
1290 on the water that originates in the glaciers of the Himalaya and feeds the river systems which are
1291 essential to the living systems of the HTS. Glacial melting (Sect. 2.3) to a critical level (Kraaijenbrink et
1292 al., 2017) and subsequent decline or seasonal failure of river flow and groundwater recharge (Nie et al.,
1293 2021; Talukder et al., 2021; Whitehead et al., 2015) could act as a potential driver or trigger other
1294 drivers (Sect. 5.4.1) of tipping for the whole system, and the joint dependence on the monsoon
1295 exacerbates the likelihood of potential system-wide state changes, albeit of a highly uncertain nature
1296 and threshold. We posit that these different but connected ecological systems are not independent, and
1297 that climate change will not affect them independently but rather that state changes in subsystems may
1298 potentially be linked at the system level. As temperature change and associated glacial-hydrological
1299 changes and monsoon changes pass possible thresholds (Mall et al., 2022; Mishra et al., 2021; Swapna
1300 et al., 2017) they could possibly tip the whole system to multidimensional new states (Fig. 1f). That is,
1301 we are positing that the potential drivers are hydrological, linking the HTS via the behaviour of the
1302 monsoon and from the Himalayan glaciers feeding a network of major river systems. It is at present
1303 difficult to define a clear and specific threshold, but it seems plausible that the entire system would be
1304 affected by these hydrological changes in a linked manner. Tipping to alternative states for parts of the
1305 HTS system is already occurring and is likely to accelerate with climate change, with system alteration
1306 to different habitats or even biomes and degradation of native and endemic species diversity (Negi et al.
1307 2022), changes in species distribution (Telwala et al., 2013), increasing dominance of invasive
1308 pan-global species adapted to high levels of disturbance, and global decreases in cold-tolerant and
1309 cold-adapted species. Human responses to climate change or to SRM in this densely populated
1310 hydro-ecological system, including land use change and human migration, would have unpredictable
1311 effects on tipping.

1312 These system changes may be integrated with biogeophysical and biogeochemical changes, with
1313 implications for future climate through complex feedback mechanisms involving albedo, hydrological
1314 cycles, changes to salinity in the Bay of Bengal, soil nutrients and microbial processes, ecosystem
1315 dynamics, and other factors.

1316 It is not known what alternative states would be should this complex and hydrologically integrated
1317 system be driven by climate change past a tipping point, but one speculation is low diversity mixed
1318 shrublands and grasslands, possibly dominated by invasive species, if high variability of water
1319 availability associated with monsoon changes combine with systematic drought after glacial melting
1320 and warming-induced increased evaporative demand. Whether SRM would cool sufficiently to prevent
1321 the loss of the Himalayan glaciers is discussed earlier (Sect. 2.3).

1322 5.4.1: Drivers and Mechanisms

1323 There are a number of potential climate change-induced drivers of tipping in the HTS system, including
1324 melting montane glaciers, changes in mean and extreme river flows, changes in the seasonality and
1325 intensity of the monsoon and behaviour of the Hadley cells, sea level rise, droughts and extreme high
1326 temperatures (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2017; Mall et al., 2022; Mishra et al., 2021; Swapna et al., 2017).
1327 Among these drivers, we posit that systemic changes in the water cycle and declining water availability
1328 after unsustainable glacier melt or monsoon changes could be the dominant driver that force systemic
1329 tipping in HTS. Global warming is melting high elevation glaciers rapidly worldwide (Sect. 2.3)
1330 (Hugonnet et al., 2021), with accelerated ice loss observed across the Himalayas over the past 40 years
1331 (Maurer et al., 2019) and a likely non-linear increasing trend with greater than 3°C warming (Rounce et
1332 al., 2023). Glacial melting in the Himalaya (Potocki et al., 2022; Kraaijenbrink et al. 2017) would result
1333 in tipping in the immediate area below the glaciers, and also for the vast areas of the HTS system,
1334 including the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin below dependent on these glaciers as a source of
1335 water. Recent studies already show that the accelerated melting of Himalayan glaciers and Tibetan
1336 Plateau snowpacks are triggering downstream hydrological changes (Nie et al., 2021), and increasing
1337 agricultural risks (Qin et al., 2020). Changes in the distribution, intensity and timing of tropical
1338 monsoonal rains in the HTS are also potential drivers of in tipping the ecological, agricultural, and
1339 human systems that depend on them. For example, climate change has been implicated in the
1340 weakening of Indian summer monsoon in recent decades (Mall et al., 2022; Mishra et al., 2021; Swapna
1341 et al., 2017), which would cause catastrophic change to some natural and agricultural systems if future
1342 monsoon changes intensify. Severe and extended heat in this region in recent years, exacerbated by
1343 drying, is likely to directly affect organism survival, species abundances and lead to extinctions,
1344 pushing some natural systems over tipping points (Mishra et al., 2020). Im et al. (2017) predicted that
1345 extreme heatwaves would exceed the human survivability limit (35°C wet-bulb temperature) at a few
1346 locations in the densely populated agricultural regions of the Ganges and Indus river basins and would
1347 approach the survivability limit over most of South Asia under the RCP8.5 scenario by the end of the
1348 century (i.e., about 4.5°C warming relative to preindustrial). Climate induced sea level rise, exacerbated
1349 by extensive river damming, is contributing to the tipping of the vast coastal mangrove systems that are
1350 an integral part of the HTS system. There also exist significant non-climate related drivers of tipping in
1351 this system, particularly deforestation (Pandit et al., 2007). Finally, it could be possible that a multitude
1352 of these drivers are likely to interact and reinforce each other to force ecological tipping at the system
1353 level, although further studies are needed to test this hypothesis.

1354 5.4.2: The impact of SRM

1355 Climate-related drivers of tipping for the complex HTS system that would be affected by SRM are
1356 glacial melting and other monsoonal change, rising sea levels, drought and extreme heat. First, SRM
1357 would partially slow the melting of Himalayan glaciers (Sect. 2.3), reducing the probability of drying
1358 out in the river systems that would drive systemic tipping of the HTS system. While SRM might relieve
1359 the likelihood of hitting tipping points caused by glacial melting, changes to the movement of the
1360 Hadley cells predicted from some SAI scenarios might result in changes in the seasonality and
1361 predictability of the monsoons, leading to drought-induced tipping of the entire HTS system by
1362 removing the rainfall needed to sustain all of the coordinated components of the system (Cheng et al.,
1363 2022; Mishra et al., 2021; Smyth et al., 2017). Eventual and partial reductions in sea level rise due to
1364 cooling from SRM, and restoration of riparian freshwater from restoration of glaciers, might have some
1365 restorative effects in pulling the mangrove forests ringing the Bay of Bengal back from tipping.
1366 However, the anthropogenic effects of damming and other land use changes might reduce these
1367 potential reversals of tipping for this part of the HTS system, or alter their probability in an
1368 unpredictable manner. Finally, reduction of the extent and severity of extreme heat and likelihood of
1369 compound drought and heat extremes from the implementation of SRM could act directly to prevent
1370 region-wide drought-heat-related deaths and extinctions of keystone species and others, preventing
1371 catastrophic changes in ecosystems and therefore pulling back system tipping points from occurring.

1372 5.4.3: Further research

1373 Research directions to better understand the potential impact of SRM on the HTS earth system element
1374 largely overlap with progress in research on mountain cryosphere, sea level rise and extreme events.
1375 While aspects of this system have been studied, much more work on the nature of the complex
1376 integrated networks that comprise this system will be critical not only for understanding the HTS, but as
1377 a model for understanding other large systems that integrate major climatic, biological, and human
1378 dimensions. Moreover, understanding if systemic tipping is possible will require establishment of the
1379 extent to which the proposed mechanisms actually act to unify this diverse system, and whether this
1380 integration is sufficient for synchronous tipping. Ecological tipping in these regions may happen before
1381 climate-driven tipping in Himalayan glaciers, sea level, and Indian monsoons because the functions of
1382 these biodiversity hotspots depend not only on external drivers in climate and hydrology but also on
1383 their internal feedbacks and human disturbance (such as damming). These human actions could
1384 exacerbate the risks of collapsing or tipping. Therefore, the timing and thresholds of tipping in these
1385 biodiversity hotspots and how these will respond to climate change and SRM requires collaborative
1386 research between climatologists, ecologists and biologists. Far greater awareness of this overlooked but
1387 major earth system element among scientists and the general public is also critically needed.

1388 **5.5: Northern Boreal Forests**

1389 The northern coniferous forest, is the largest of Earth’s biomes, and although low in biodiversity with
1390 many circumboreal species and genera, also is a major reservoir for carbon. Anthropogenic warming is
1391 greatest in these northern regions due to Arctic amplification (Serreze and Barry, 2011), and warming
1392 nights and extended periods of extreme heat are directly and indirectly forcing major structural changes
1393 in some parts of this biome, potentially precipitating tipping points, perhaps from forests to shrublands
1394 or grassland due to biotic and abiotic disturbances (Seidl et al., 2017) or from shrublands or grasslands
1395 to forests due to temperature-driven northern migration of boreal trees (Berner and Goetz, 2022). Rao et
1396 al. (2023) found that climate change is predicted to expose a foundational and dominant tree species
1397 across the entire region, *Larix siberica*, to temperatures that result in irreversible damage to
1398 photosynthetic tissue in the near future, leading to widespread and abrupt synchronous tree mortality.
1399 Tree mortality at this extent would be likely to cause a tipping point for the entire southern boreal forest
1400 system to a grassland-steppe system, as has been already observed in some areas (Li et al., 2023b). They
1401 suggest that an abrupt tipping point may be reached within the next decades which would
1402 “fundamentally and irreversibly alter the ecosystem state at regional to sub-continental spatial scales”
1403 for hundreds of km along an extensive area in the southern Eurasian boundary of the northern
1404 coniferous forests.

1405 **5.5.1: Drivers and Feedbacks**

1406 Warmer temperatures, increased evaporative demand, increased droughts, lower water availability and
1407 reduced snowpack and duration of snowpack under climate change all directly stress the coniferous
1408 forest (Ruiz-Pérez and Vico, 2020) and in doing so makes them more vulnerable to other stressors such
1409 as insect attack. Northern expansion of bark beetles (Singh et al., 2024; Venäläinen et al., 2020) and
1410 reduced generation times for these and other pests have killed large expanses of northern coniferous
1411 forests, and the dead and dying trees combined with warmer temperatures and drought have drastically
1412 reduced fire return intervals in many areas and greatly increased the scope and severity of fires (Bentz et
1413 al., 2010). The effects on feedbacks to climate are complex and difficult to predict. Reduced duration of
1414 snow cover reduces albedo, potentially increasing surface absorption of direct radiant energy from
1415 sunlight by the dark canopies of these trees. A tipping point leading to a shift from boreal forest to
1416 grassland/steppe might potentially increase albedo, at least during the growing season. Extensive fires
1417 and decomposition of soil carbon stores resulting from thawing of permafrost would greatly decrease
1418 carbon storage and contribute to increases to atmospheric carbon and global warming (Ruiz-Pérez and
1419 Vico 2020). Thus dieback can have opposite regional (cooling by increased albedo) and global
1420 (warming by carbon release) climatic effects. These dynamics could interact in complex stochastic

ways, with potential for positive feedbacks. Other climate elements that can lead to tipping in this system include thawing of permafrost (Sect. 2.6).

5.5.2: The impacts of SRM

As far as the authors know, there are no specific studies on the impact of SRM on boreal forests. By cooling average temperatures, it is possible that the consequences of SRM for the driving forces that either promote (northern migration of trees) or suppress (fires and insect attacks) northern coniferous forests might all be lessened and the system pulled back from such tipping points in either direction. On the one hand, cooler temperatures are likely to slow or stop the migration of trees into tundra and preserve the original biome configuration. On the other hand, extending periods below freezing by SRM might limit the northward spread of destructive insect outbreaks, extend snow cover, and possibly reduce drought and vapour pressure deficit, enhancing the resilience of these forests and pulling them back from a tipping point. Preservation of cold temperatures and prevention of extreme heat events could prevent widespread mortality of *Larix* and other foundational tree species in the boreal forest, likewise pulling it back from a tipping point from forest to steppe. By reducing the frequency and extent of boreal forest wildfires, reductions in heat could also reduce the positive feedbacks between loss of carbon stores in living trees and soil organic matter and the carbon in the atmosphere. Furthermore, given complex eco-hydrological mechanisms in boreal forest dynamics, the large uncertainty in simulated regional precipitation changes under SRM might complicate the above temperature-driven mechanisms of tipping dynamics (see more discussions on this aspect in Sects. 1.1 and 5.2).

5.5.3: Further research

Research explicitly of the impact of SRM on boreal forests is needed. The migration of northern coniferous forests to higher mountains and higher latitudes is creating new ecological systems that demand more research to understand their tipping points. Further advancement in the monitoring and/or prediction of abiotic (fires, drought, wind, snow and ice) and biotic (insects, pathogens, invasive species) disturbance agents and their interactions (Seidl et al. 2017) under global warming are key to predict future disturbance and resilience of both existing and expanding northern coniferous forests under novel climates of SRM.

1449 **6: Discussion**

1450 **6.1 Conclusions**

1451

1452 Our review suggests that for 9 out of 15 tipping elements considered, spatially homogeneous
1453 peak-shaving (Sect. 1.2) SRM using an SAI deployment would be at least partially effective in reducing
1454 the overall effect of their drivers, while for 4 we could not determine the sign of SRM's impact due to
1455 low process understanding (Table 1, Fig. 3). AMOC was the only tipping element where we judged
1456 SRM to possibly overcompensate the effect of climate change on the drivers (its range being partial
1457 compensation to overcompensation). For 2 of the tipping elements, the Sub-Polar Gyre and Amazon
1458 Rainforest Collapse, the effect of SRM at minimum provided no compensation for the effect of climate
1459 change. For none of the tipping elements was it expected that SRM may worsen the overall effects of
1460 the drivers, although for some their drivers were worsened (Table 1, Fig. 3). Moreover, regional
1461 heterogeneities may be significant; for example, for the Western Amazon, the overall effect was
1462 Worsening-Partial compensation, but this is less significant for overall Amazon Rainforest tipping than
1463 the effect on the Eastern Amazon, hence the overall judgement of the effect on tipping was No
1464 compensation-Partial compensation. Uncertainties are considerable to very large for the vast majority of
1465 tipping elements, particularly those where the drivers were less strongly coupled to global temperature.
1466 Moreover, our analysis has largely relied on qualitative judgement based on process understanding, so
1467 these should mostly be considered as evidence-backed hypotheses needing further research.
1468 Furthermore, our 'overall judgements' were based on our assessment of the relative importance of
1469 different drivers, and for many tipping elements this is not fully known.

1470

1471 Although rate-dependence effects could play a role for some ecological tipping elements and potentially
1472 AMOC, for most tipping elements the level and (for slowly-evolving systems like ice caps) the duration
1473 of drivers, rather than their rate of change, determines whether the system tips. This implies that
1474 preventing tipping would require SRM to be in place until other measures, such as negative emissions,
1475 can reduce the strength of the tipping drivers - merely slowing down the rate of warming would at most
1476 postpone tipping. Absence of rate-dependence may also imply that a "termination shock" from
1477 discontinuation of SRM would not affect tipping probability for most tipping elements.

1478

1479 Deliberately using SRM to reverse self-sustained tipping dynamics, once started, may be more difficult
1480 than reducing drivers preventatively, for several reasons. First, it may require stronger forcing, which
1481 may not be physically possible for many tipping elements (Table 1), or reversal may still exhibit
1482 considerable hysteresis. Second, process understanding is weaker than for drivers, making it harder to

1483 judge the correct dose, or timing, of the intervention; in particular, reliable early-warning-signals may
1484 not be available for most tipping points. Whilst it may be possible for some tipping elements to be
1485 ‘pulled back from the brink’ by ‘emergency deployment’ of SRM soon after tipping has begun, this
1486 strategy appears risky and ill-advised. Thus, we conclude, like Lenton (2018), that such a strategy ought
1487 not to be relied upon to reduce the tipping risk, and instead we suggest that the most feasible role (if
1488 any) for SRM would be preemptive deployment preventing hitting tipping elements rather than reversal
1489 once they have been hit.

1490

1491 **6.2 Uncertainties**

1492

1493 *Physical uncertainties* for individual tipping elements were discussed in specific sections above. Some
1494 stem from limited process understanding of tipping elements involved, e.g. regarding threshold values
1495 for driver intensity and duration, the relative importance of and possible interaction between drivers,
1496 and the dynamics of the tipping process once initiated. Climate models notoriously struggle to represent
1497 tipping behaviour, partly because relevant processes and/or subsystems are not included in models,
1498 partly due to model uncertainties and biases.

1499

1500 SRM introduces an additional layer of uncertainty, namely, regarding its effect on tipping drivers and
1501 feedbacks. It is often possible to obtain a reasonable estimate of SRM’s effect on drivers, especially if
1502 they are temperature-driven, although sometimes the drivers less coupled to temperature (e.g.
1503 precipitation in the Amazon) are much harder to predict, and introduce much more uncertainty into our
1504 estimates. Feedbacks are often even less well understood, and the estimate for the effect of SRM on
1505 these are often even more uncertain. Direct climate simulations are typically lacking, either because the
1506 tipping process itself is not well represented, or because dedicated simulations with SRM have not been
1507 performed. In some cases, proxies can be used (e.g. modelled AMOC weakening for potential AMOC
1508 tipping).

1509

1510 *Strategy and scenario uncertainty* arises because the effect of SRM is most likely dependent on the
1511 implementation strategy (e.g., type and location of SRM) and its time trajectory. Our assessment is
1512 based on a spatially fairly homogeneous peak-shaving scenario, but spatially inhomogeneous cooling
1513 and associated circulation changes may have strong beneficial or adverse local impacts, while delaying
1514 SRM use may mean that some tipping points are already breached.

1515

1516 *Political uncertainties* are arguably the most concerning uncertainties around SRM. We will only
1517 highlight a few that might affect SRM’s ability to prevent tipping - the discussion of whether a potential

reduction in tipping risk (or other climate risks) is worth incurring political risks from SRM is important, but beyond the scope of this study. Mitigation deterrence (McLaren, 2016), if it actually occurs (Cherry et al., 2023), might mean that SRM leads to higher GHG concentrations than if it had never been deployed. This could exacerbate tipping risks, especially if negative emissions turn out to be difficult, and/or if SRM cannot be sustained at the required intensity for long enough to avoid temperature overshoot. International disagreement on SRM may lead to inconsistent or inappropriate implementation that could be delayed, of variable or insufficient intensity, or include a host of local to regional measures that interact with tipping points in potentially unpredictable ways. Moreover, large scale CDR required to achieve the CO₂ concentration reductions needed in a ‘peak-shaving’ scenario may put significant pressure on ecosystems. In those scenarios, whilst SRM may help avoid tipping in the ecosystem, the effect of the overall SRM and CDR package may be more equivocal.

6.3 Research recommendations

The wider climate science community will hopefully continue to work towards better process understanding of tipping, including better representation thereof in models. In the short run, a systematic assessment on (the relative importance of) tipping drivers may be helpful. Where applicable, this can be done with subsystem models (e.g., ice sheet models) if relevant processes are not included in global Earth System Models.

For many non-SAI techniques, uncertainties regarding their effectiveness and/or technical feasibility (including the time of earliest possible deployment) remain large, yet those parameters are vital for potentially suppressing tipping. The SRM community should continue to address these questions. In addition, SRM’s effect on relevant tipping drivers, especially those less closely coupled to temperature, should be systematically assessed in existing and new SRM simulations.

For tipping points that are reasonably well represented in models, dedicated simulations of SRM’s effect on preventing or reversing tipping should be performed. If model uncertainties are still large, strong SRM and GHG forcing can be used to explore whether certain processes are possible “in principle”, whereas in the course of time, more modest and/or realistic forcing scenarios can be studied. Direct simulation of preventing or reversing tipping may not yet be feasible for tipping elements that are not well represented in models.

A challenge is the huge number of possible SRM scenarios, which may vary on background GHG trajectories, SRM method (SAI or other; possibly combinations) and location, starting year, intensity,

1553 and so on. The choice of scenario may depend on the underlying research question, for example: Can
1554 (and should) SRM be optimised, and with which objectives? Are there low-regret options? Can
1555 (ill-coordinated) implementation exacerbate tipping risks? Communication with social scientists and
1556 stakeholders can help prioritise research questions.

1557

1558 Our preliminary assessment suggests that well-implemented SRM may have an overall beneficial effect
1559 on many Earth System tipping elements, although uncertainties are still very large. Whilst tipping
1560 concerns are important and ought to be a part of any assessment of the benefits and risks of SRM, such
1561 an assessment must be holistic and consider tipping concerns alongside other climatic, environmental,
1562 social and political factors that are affected by SRM.

1563 **Author Contributions**

1564 Overall lead and coordination: GF with input from CW
1565 Conceptualisation and methodology: GF with input from CW
1566 Introduction: CW with assistance of GF and JG
1567 Section 2.1 to 2.4: MA under the supervision of PI
1568 Section 2.5-2.8: AD under the supervision of PI
1569 Section 3: CW
1570 Section 4: PI
1571 Section 5: YF and JG (and GF on Section 5.2 and 5.3)
1572 Discussion: GF and CW
1573 Reviewing of all sections: GF

1574 **Competing Interests**

1575 The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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